

# DAWN OF CHARACTER IN THE MIND OF THE CHILD

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TO A GROUP  
OF  
FIVE LITTLE TEACHERS  
THIS BOOK IS LOVINGLY  
DEDICATED





## PREFACE TO NEW AND REVISED EDITION

"THE Dawn of Character in the Mind of the Child" was first published fifteen years ago ; that it has met a public need is shown by the fact that some sixteen thousand copies of the book have been sold. The general principles of child psychology laid down in the book were based upon direct observation of children and remain true to-day. But recent developments in the study of the Unconscious mind, and the part which instincts play in the growth of behaviour, rendered it desirable to re-group and re-interpret some of the facts, and to add other facts gained from later experience of child life. The chapter on punishment has been completely rewritten, and now forms an indictment of all forms of arbitrary punishment in the early training of the child.

The book is not a study of the abnormal, but of the normal, child. The normal child, in following his natural desires, often causes anxiety to those about him ; but a perfectly natural and satisfactory character will develop, when he is sympathetically and wisely handled.

EDITH E. READ MUMFORD.

WITHINGTON,  
MANCHESTER,  
*September, 1925.*

## PREFACE

MANY are called upon to be responsible for children who have come but little into close contact with them. Unfamiliar with children's natures and with children's ways, they are yet constantly called upon to act, and to act on the spur of the moment. Mistakes, under such circumstances, are almost inevitable; mistakes which often entail suffering to the child and disappointment to parent or teacher.

To many, fortunately, mother-wit comes so readily that it hardly seems necessary for them to prepare themselves for their task. But I believe there are not a few, who would face their responsibilities with more joy and confidence, if they knew somewhat of the natural workings of the child's mind.

We cannot rightly judge the child from our own standpoint; he is not "man-writ-small," but an unknown quantity, "man-in-the-making."

In this book, my endeavour has been to interpret the child's experiences from his own point of view. Both in the earlier psychological chapters, in which I have tried to trace his own development; and in the later chapters, concerned with his development in relation to us and our attitude towards him; the aim has been to see, as far as possible, with the child's eyes. Those who are actually occupied with children, whether as parents, teachers or nurses, need a Psychology which is, above all else, a *living* Science. Theory must grow out of, and constantly be kept in touch with, practical experience of children's ways.

One word more. It is often assumed that a child's happiness is in proportion to his freedom to do exactly as he likes, and that discipline and method in his

upbringing, at any rate as far as the home is concerned, will result in less freedom, and consequently in less joy. This I cannot believe, unless it be that the child has not been understood. Through whole-hearted obedience to a reasonable law, the child should find a truer liberty; through the strengthening of the higher, and weakening of the lower, impulses of his nature, he should find greater happiness. The justification of discipline is that by helping the child to overcome the difficulties of his nature, it not only increases his mental and moral efficiency as he grows to manhood, but adds to the fullness and joy of his life while he is yet young.

In conclusion, I should like to express my thanks to those without whom the book would never have been written—to those who, by their love and understanding, made my own childhood full of joy; to those early teachers, chief among whom are Dr. Sophie Bryant and Rev. Stopford Brooke, to whose influence, as I look back, I can trace the main thoughts that underlie this book; to Professor Carveth Read, of the University of London, for his kindness in reading the chapters on Psychology; to Mr. A. H. Hope,\* who has helped me throughout with valuable criticism; and, above all, to my husband. He has not only helped me to interpret my experiences, he has shared them with me. As together we have thought over any difficulty, his larger standpoint has helped to widen mine, his sense of humour to hold the balance true. I am proud to acknowledge my indebtedness to him.

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- (4) The result of experience is a conflict in the child's mind between two opposing ideas, causing delay, and giving opportunity for thought before action; *the child is called upon to choose.*
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## CHAPTER I

### A PLEA FOR A CLOSER STUDY OF CHILD LIFE

Advantages gained from a more intimate knowledge of child life—Need for clear aims and reasoned methods in dealing with children—Influence of environment—Need for self-criticism—Helpful criticism from those who are not in daily contact with children—"It is a very responsible thing to be grown-up, for we become part of the causation of life"—Need of preparation to meet such responsibility—Elementary child psychology should be taught to every girl before she leaves school—Such psychology must be *practical*, in touch with child life—Our attitude towards "difficult" children.

FOR many years past, general opinion has been steadily growing in the direction of admitting that all who are placed in charge of children, whether in the nursery or in the early days of school life, have as much need of training and preparation in the principles of growth, and in the physical, mental and moral aspects of childhood, as sick-nurses have of special medical and surgical training for the care of children in grave sickness. Such preparation and training need to be accurate and detailed. Principles must be clearly understood, and their practical issues grasped. Ordinary observation of children, however sympathetic it may be, will not give those in charge the insight that is needed to understand, nor the foresight that is needed to act wisely. Yet the insight and foresight which can be gained from an exact knowledge of child life, enable those who are called upon to deal with children to do so with a power of independent judgment, which frees them from worry and the bias of sentimentality, and endows with a deeper interest all the details of early child life.

It is a matter of common experience that a tiny infant behaves differently with different people—he will fret in the arms of a nervous person, and cease

from fretting directly he is taken over by one who has the confidence, begotten of experience, that she can make him comfortable. If this is true of an infant in arms, it is far truer of older children. "Boys are like nettles: handle them firmly and they will not sting you," said Mr. Paton in his lecture on "The Genus Boy"—and this, though said of boys of older growth, is true of children of younger age. If we understand the right method of dealing with children, difficulties will vanish. We must get the knowledge which dispels the doubt.

It is a common habit for us, when in authority over children, to fritter away our strength in useless and ineffectual action, because we have not understood clearly the nature of the difficulty with which we are called upon to deal. Sometimes we are over-zealous in helping the children, when they desire to help themselves. Sometimes we "nag" at them, when it would be more effective to leave them alone. Sometimes we weakly yield, when we ought to hold out firmly, and we then prepare the way for future difficulties. Sometimes we are over-insistent in exacting obedience in details, forgetting the principle which underlies the details. We go one step too far, and there is a struggle between us—a struggle which is harmful, as all struggles are, and which could have been avoided by the exercise of greater wisdom on our part. More than half our difficulties with children are due to our clumsy way of going to work.

Why are we so clumsy in our method, or want of method, in dealing with our children? Mainly because, even when we have an intense love for them and desire to help them to become their best selves, we have no clear idea of the pathway along which they must travel, and we possess no real knowledge of their powers and limitations. We allow our affections to override our judgment, and purchase immediate relief at the expense of future difficulties. Even if we cherish an ideal, we have no clear conception of the broad general lines

along which they must travel if they are to use the powers that are within them.

Our ideal must be no narrow one : it must give scope for all the powers within the child. When we have formed some idea as to the kind of person our child may become, we can ask ourselves what provision we can make for him to work towards that end now. The nursery, the home and the early school life afford a foundation upon which all the fuller manifestations of character will subsequently be built. Development proceeds by slow stages. The emotions and expressions which are natural and permissible at one stage may be less natural and not permissible at another. And outward behaviour is not enough. We want, in home and school, to produce something more than nicely behaved children, quite as certainly as we want in the future something more than mere orderly citizens. Nor shall we be satisfied if our boy's wits alone are sufficiently cultivated to enable him to obtain personal advantages in competition with his fellows, to be among the fittest who, surviving in the struggle, succeed in pushing the weakest to the wall. If these results could satisfy our ideals, we have virtually abandoned all attempts at moral education. Those who have the real welfare of children at heart desire the whole nature to develop at once, mentally, physically, morally and spiritually. Though the world is not a school obviously planned for the cultivation of virtue, it is still an arena in which the moral qualities shine forth, and conflict will strengthen the moral fibre.

What is this ideal we should have in our minds of the kind of man or woman we want the child under our care to become ? Our ideal man must be a citizen and a worker among men—not an ascetic or a visionary : his mind must be full ; his habits must be trained ; his energies must be ample, and ready to be directed into any useful beneficial channel that seems to demand them. Moreover, the complexity and variety of occupations and interests in such a man's life will be so

great that he must have a well-balanced judgment—able to select some objects on which he may bestow his sympathy and exclude others ; he must not waste upon trifles the energies which are needed for the more important duties of his life. There must be a transparency and simplicity in all his actions that they may be read by all men. He must be honest in endeavour and generous in appreciation of others ; strong-willed, large-hearted, large-minded, and large-souled.

There is no break in the development of conscious life. The good man or woman begins to come into existence when the little one is but entering on a conscious reasoning life. The so-called drudgery of daily life in the nursery—the persistent questions of eager little people—their mischief, their temper, their caprices—the struggles and numberless little duties—can only be efficiently met and wisely faced when our own ideals are high. We do not lay any such large ideals before the child : it is sufficient for him to cultivate the so-called commonplace virtues ; to lay, in nursery or school, the foundations of self-control, bravery, humility and honesty. He is still an egoist and he will only learn slowly to appreciate the relative value of different “ ends ” of human conduct, and to reserve his energies for those social duties which are of most worth. The foundations of his character must be laid upon the free expression of his natural instincts and emotions, so that, when he grows to manhood, his purposes may not be restricted. His impulses, guided by understanding, must grow into a determined will so that, in after life, nothing shall thwart his performance of that which he has wisely set before him.

What provision can we make now to assist him to become his best self ? How can we understand what forces are naturally at work in the child, and how far these can work themselves out unaided ? When a gardener plants a seed, if he wants that seed to produce a perfect plant of its kind, he needs to know, not only the nature of the full-grown plant, but the natural

laws concerned in the development of plant-life in general, and of that special plant in particular. Unless he knows that, he can be no judge as to how far and in what direction he may interfere. Unwise interference, especially by a zealous gardener, may do more harm than good : it would have been better to have left the plant to Nature alone. So with the educator and the child. Without proper knowledge of the laws of moral growth, a disciplinarian is likely to do more harm than good.

This is sometimes seen in the case of a strong-willed and therefore, in his early years, a rebellious child, who is brought up in an atmosphere of strict discipline. With wise and understanding treatment, such a child would gradually acquire self-control. But if these rebellious feelings, instead of being understood, are treated as wholly wrong, as something to be stamped out, we may "break his will," as it is called, and so dwarf his whole nature more or less permanently ; or we may get apparent submission on the outside, hiding the feelings of rebellion within, and then, directly the opportunity occurs of freedom from discipline, the ungoverned forces of his nature will break out in whatever direction they choose. The strong forces of the will which lay at the root of the rebellious instinct have been in any case wasted. Better allow the wheat and the tares to grow together than, in our blindness, pluck up the wheat for the tares.

The gardener, having learnt the nature of the seedling entrusted to his care, having learnt the laws which govern its growth, plants it at the right time, so that the influence of sun and moisture may come in due course. Then he watches, acting cautiously, always with his end in view. Occasionally he interferes, pruning or developing, until he ultimately sees the seedling grow into the full-grown and perfect plant of its kind. And even then he has always more to learn. And the educator, holding on to an ideal of the good man or woman, and studying the special tendencies

of the little human being, fulfils towards the child the function which the gardener fulfils towards the plant, steadily training, rarely pruning, and never violently disturbing.

Each day yields not one but many problems, and decisions are demanded on the spur of the moment, without time for thought. That is the serious part. We not only need to be able to act wisely and consistently, but we must be ready to act at once. Any intuition, which we may feel ourselves to possess in dealing with children, needs therefore to be supplemented by observation and careful study. Given greater knowledge and foresight on our part, wrong decisions will be to a large extent avoided.

*Ill-behaviour in children is a problem to be understood, and not something to be suppressed by punishment. Not only is force no remedy, but, by the exercise of force, we can do irremediable harm.* Knowledge is needed as well as love. Every difficulty in dealing with children should leave those in charge wiser and better equipped to deal with the next difficulty.

But what about those who are neither parents, nurses nor teachers? Why should there be any need or duty, in their case, to study children? *They* are not specially responsible for children's upbringing. The necessity of child study for parents, and for others who are in a responsible position, is evident; but what of those who only come into contact with children occasionally, and even then have no direct responsibility?

Can any one of us say that we have *no* responsibility? The child's character is receptive in early years, he unconsciously responds to all impressions received from without, and not only to impressions consciously made upon him by those responsible for his upbringing. Environment is to a child what atmosphere is to any living organism—its effect is all-powerful, though unconscious, affecting the character, the habits of life and thought of the child. The parent is responsible as an individual for the training of his own offspring,



nurses and teachers must be equipped to carry out the duties which they undertake, but *we are all responsible as citizens for the coming generation*—the citizens of to-morrow. Since we cannot help influencing the children, are we not all bound to try to understand them, in order that such influence as we exert, whether consciously or unconsciously, may be exerted for good?

The child is a bundle of impulses—a mass of potentialities—and the child's character develops for good or ill, in accordance with the direction in which those impulses find expression. But training is of little avail, if the lives of those with whom the child is in close contact are at variance with the teaching of the home and school. Our characters, and children's characters, develop as the result of unconscious influences far more than by those of which we are conscious. An ill-educated daughter of the slums, in one of "Punch's" pictures, was represented as saying to her younger sister: "If the woman comes with the tracts, tell her to leave them with the lady next door."

On the other hand, a boy, aged 6, away at boarding-school, used to talk of the "lady" who came to his house to do the washing. Evidently the charwoman was not treated by his home people as if she were of a different social status to themselves. The true spirit of democracy had been developed in him unconsciously. Children reflect, though they do not know it, the lives and thoughts of their elders.

Frank, aged six, was anxious not to share with his brothers and sisters a toy, which had just been given to him. He was not forced to share by those in authority, the toy was his, and he had therefore the right of sole possession, but he knew that the sharing of pleasures was a habit of life with those about him, and he felt that it must be copied. "I do wish it was the *thing* for people to be selfish," he murmured, as, at first hesitatingly, he began to share his toy. Rapidly his mood changed when he had once started sharing, and the enjoyment in the toy was increased, not diminished.

Two little mites of four and five were playing at "house." One was "the baby," the other "the mother." "We're playing at children," one of the mites explained to a passer-by. "Nurse has gone out and Mother is putting the children to bed, so we're having extra treats"—a reflection again of the life around, of the one night made special, when Mother took charge of the nursery.

Criticizing ourselves, rather than criticizing the children, is a mental attitude, the importance of which is, I think, too little realized. We are thoughtless in the presence of children, talk glibly about "little pitchers having long ears," and rouse an unhealthy curiosity by suddenly ceasing our conversation, by talking French, or by hinting at possibilities fraught with mystery to the child. These things are as tantalizing to the child as it is tantalizing to us to receive a letter with something scratched out so carefully that it is evident it was not meant for us to read! So-called "white lies" are told in the children's presence; gossip is talked; their questions are often thoughtlessly, sometimes untruthfully, answered; their looks and their doings are discussed in their presence; they are either "shown off" or thrust heedlessly into the background--and all the while the child's character is being influenced unconsciously by the impressions so received. I once read of a child who had been severely reproved by his mother in the presence of a third person for some childish fault which he had committed. The presence of the outsider at all in the circumstances was hard enough, but, just as the child was leaving the room, he heard his mother make some remark to her friend, making light of the fault which she had before been treating apparently so seriously. He was a sensitive, serious little chap. The impression thus made was never eradicated. His mother's influence over him was lost from that moment. Latent impulses of revenge or jealousy are often thoughtlessly encouraged by telling the child to "hit the naughty floor" when he falls

and hurts himself, or by suggesting that "his nose will be put out of joint now," he is no longer "Mother's pet," when a new baby arrives to share with him the kingdom of home. Such remarks are thoughtlessly made, they are not meant to be taken seriously—but a small child does not understand.

To keep in touch with the child means a bigger effort—more study—than we realize. When we grow up we have often put "childish things" too far behind us—the child's vivid imagination to which nothing is commonplace or ordinary—his keen zest for play—his readiness to admire—his receptive heart—his instant desire to put ideas into practice—his fear of the unknown when so much is unknown—even the recollection of all this is put too far behind. The result of our having grown up is that we are often unnecessarily hard on the children, not pausing to see how natural a child's so-called faults often are. We too should want to walk along the streets looking behind us all the time, if we were sufficiently absorbed in what was going on—just as we keep turning to get one last look when we have said good-bye to a friend! If we were as delightfully free from self-consciousness as a child, and had his capacity for enjoying everything, *we* should ask for chocolates if we saw them. I do not say that the child must not learn to behave differently, but that we should realize that many apparent faults in behaviour are natural expressions of vitality. To enter into the child's world we need to look back into our own childhood and recall old memories. It sometimes seems as if our own experience of childhood had gone past recall, but, when watching the children closely, sympathetically, something that we see in them revives old memories in us, and helps us to draw close to the tiny people. Our view of life—even of our own life—widens as we look at the present in the dim light of the past; with the wider outlook comes comprehension and faith—comprehension and faith not only for ourselves, but for the children. "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

We are able then, by closer companionship, to help the children, and this companionship in turn helps us. The world is richer for grown-up people, if their circle of friends includes children, for of "such is the Kingdom of Heaven." The friendship of children helps to keep alive in us that sense of wonder and joy, of the freshness and beauty of life, that faith in the Unseen, that power of energy and strength of imagination, which belongs peculiarly to the young. Huxley always had a great tenderness for children, and, in his old age, his love of children "brimmed over (writes his son) with undiminished force, unimpeded by circumstances." Children seemed to have a natural confidence in him, they felt that no appeal would be rejected, whether for help in distress, or for the satisfaction of the child's desire for knowledge. Stevenson was the richer for his child lovers, to one of whom, whose birthday, sad to say, was on February 29th, he once solemnly bequeathed, by written deed of gift, his own birthday and his own name. Sir W. Scott spent whole days of happiness with little "Maidie," (the "Marjory Fleming" immortalized by Dr. John Brown) whom Sir Walter used to carry off in the corner of his plaid and play with for hours. "The year before Maidie died," writes Dr. Brown, "when in Edinburgh, she was at a Twelfth Night supper at Scott's, in Castle Street (she was seven years old). The company had all come— all but Marjory—Scott's familiars, whom we all know, were there—all were come but Marjorie; and all were dull, because Scott was dull. 'Where's that bairn? What can have come over her? I'll go myself and see.' And he was getting up and would have gone, when the bell rang, and in came Duncan Roy and his henchman Dougald, with the Sedan chair, which was brought right into the lobby, and its top raised. And there in the darkness and dingy old cloth, sat Maidie, in white, her eyes gleaming, and Scott, bending over her in ecstasy, 'hung over her enamoured.' 'Sit ye there, my dautie, till they all see you'; and forthwith he brought them

all. You can fancy the scene. And he lifted her up and marched to his seat with her on his stout shoulder and set her down beside him ; and then began the night, and such a night ! Those who knew Scott best said that night was never equalled ; Maidie and he were the stars."

But more than joy is gained as a result of loving children more and knowing them better. More intimate knowledge leads to greater respect. The self-willed and probably passionate child—the mischievous child who is always needing some fresh outlet for his superabundant energy—the child who is for ever propounding questions which only a few people know enough to answer—the highly imaginative child, who finds it difficult to distinguish truth from falsehood—on a superficial acquaintance, such children (if they belong to other people, if they are only fellow-creatures and nothing more) are a nuisance. They break in upon the peace and comfort of life, they make work and worry for all around. But if we look below the surface, we gain respect even for these "ugly ducklings." When a mite of three and a half asserts his opinion in opposition to ours with the words, "Don't you conterindinck me", or when, in spite of his consciousness of the inevitableness of nursery discipline, he says, "Did you say I was to do that ? Den I won't," we realize and admire the pluck of the mites, opposing their lesser to our greater strength. A little lad under three had just been got out of the bath, when something prompted him to tell his mother to "shut up." He was warned that if this expression were repeated, his mother would leave him, and the nurse would come and finish bathing him. The mite drew up his naked body to its full small height, and, looking straight at his mother, hurled out the words : "Shut up, shut up, shut up, shut up, shut up !" Dirt is said to be matter in the wrong place, childish sins are energy, force of character, turned in the wrong direction. There is a wonderful nobility in the way a boy can stand up and

receive punishment which he knows he has earned—there are no grumbles, no tears ; like a brave man he can face the inevitable unflinchingly. Your "naughty child," as Mrs. Bryant says, "is unfinished rather than wicked"—it is our business to see children not only as they are, but also as they have it in them to be

Increased knowledge leads, then, to increased respect, and again, what we respect, we learn to understand better. Now, in this growth of knowledge, those who are not in constant contact with the same children have in certain respects an advantage over mothers and nurses. The mother is occupied day in, day out, with a mere handful of children ; never able to get right away from her task, so as to look at the children with the impartial eyes of an outsider, often she cannot see the wood for the trees. She therefore tends either to exaggerate, or to be blind to, the children's defects, as the case may be. Moral growth is necessarily slow, and those who are trying day by day to ensure such moral growth, are often impressed by the slowness of it, rather than by the growth itself. Those who are not thus responsible for a few children as individuals, who only come into contact with them occasionally, can the more readily detect changes in moral, as they can and do in physical, growth. Their outlook should be wider ; they have had the opportunity of watching so many different types of children. If they have used these opportunities, they should have experience with which they can encourage the mothers.

But such experience is helpful only in so far as it is rightly interpreted ; it must be based upon facts, not only sympathetically observed, but observed critically, and with a reasoned insight. Child study is valuable, not only to those who are directly concerned with children, but also to those who, less directly involved, are free to gain a wider outlook over the child-world.

One and all of us are responsible for the children ; our influence is greater than we think. If, then, we realize and accept this responsibility as inevitable,

in what way can we prepare ourselves and our girls to meet it?

If every girl, before she left school and became absorbed in the routine of her daily occupation, could realize the infinite possibilities of child-life and gain some insight into the child's point of view, her interest in life would be widened and her instincts find fuller satisfaction.

There should surely be no difficulty in adding a course of Child-Psychology to the present scheme of Housewifery in vogue in many schools. A single short course of lessons should be enough. The facts which need to be grasped, in Psychology as in Physiology, are few, simple, and, when accompanied by illustrations in the form of stories of child life, self-evident. Most girls from sixteen to eighteen would be readily interested, and the subject would be within the comprehension of every one of them.

But teaching that is to be real, helpful and inspiring, must be *practical*—not the Psychology of the study, but of the nursery, full of the humour and vitality which belongs to childhood, not overweighted with close reasoning. Our girls need not be trained to become psychologists: they do not need to be overburdened with a single intellectual fact over and above what will help them to understand and enter into children's ways. Such knowledge will prevent their natures being dwarfed.

My own belief is that the greater interest in children that would result from the adoption of a plan of this kind, if carried out generally, and by the right people in the right way, would so widely spread the right sort of love of, and interest in, children—the love that overrides difficulties—that our present danger of a diminishing birth-rate among the middle classes would be visibly lessened; for the mother so instructed would more readily accept her responsibilities, which would present themselves to her as privileges rather than as drudgery. A family of children at the present time

is often felt to be a burden and an expense, more than it is felt to be a source of riches and joy.

But, be that as it may, the gain to the children who are already in our midst, especially the so-called "difficult" and "naughty" ones among them, would be great. Some children are liked by everyone; some are liked by few and disliked by many—disliked usually because not understood, constantly "rubbed the wrong way." The most unlovable and unlovely child is so, either because he has inherited as a birthright too many unsocial impulses, or because, though he began life well equipped, circumstances have in some way told against him. Someone, it may be, stepped on him "when he was a little fellow." In either case, is it his fault? Are not *we* responsible? Surely such little "sinners" make an even greater demand upon our love than "the ninety and nine who need no repentance."

But love, you may say, must be spontaneous, it cannot be commanded. True; but interest and attention can be cultivated, and interest makes for knowledge, knowledge increases understanding, understanding generates sympathy, and sympathy will blossom into love. If a child seems to us "not nice," and jars upon our sensibilities, then the fault is partly ours, that, child as he is, we find him thus. The greater his moral weakness, the greater should be our consciousness of pity and love and longing to help. Physical weakness rarely arouses in us any other feeling. Why should moral weakness? Is it not only because we have never *thought*?

As for our girls, the start in the right direction should be enough. They will have learnt how to think. The result will be that, as they watch, they will grow to reverence more deeply, love more truly and understand more clearly, not only the lovable children, but *all* children. The charity that hopeth all things, and believeth all things, is impelled by the heart; it is wisest when it is also guided by the head.



## CHAPTER II

### THE CONTENTS OF THE CHILD'S MIND

Contents of the mind of a grown-up person—Complexity—Elements due to sense-impressions, emotions, bodily sensations, memories—Focus and margin—Change in contents of consciousness—Continuity and unity—Fore-consciousness—The Unconscious mind—Contents of the child's mind—Practical value of psychological facts—Disobedience, forgetfulness, inattention—Dawdling and concentration of attention—Effect of constant prohibitions—The child's actions, the result of his special temperament and experience—The unconscious motive in the child's actions

BREAKFAST is over ; we are all in the nursery together—Frank, Jessie, Molly, Baby and I. My morning duties are done and I am ready to take the children out for a walk. I move across the nursery to the cupboard to fetch their outdoor clothes ; but my bodily movements are automatic and do not engage my attention. My mind is filled with impressions due to a number of things external to myself, which I see or hear, or which otherwise reach my mind through the medium of my senses, and with memories and thoughts for the most part associated with these. I hear, though vaguely, the sounds of the traffic outside ; I am dimly aware of the temperature of the room.

Yesterday was an extra busy day and I am somewhat conscious of a slight feeling of weariness which makes the routine of nursery life more of a strain. I have had bad news this morning and, though I am not definitely thinking about that, a dim undercurrent of sadness colours for the time my outlook and lessens my pleasure in watching the children's play. Molly, the two-year-old baby, is trying to pull the hair out of her Teddy bear, and I check her in the attempt. I see Frank and Jessie playing trains with the nursery chairs, Jessie, the one

and only passenger, seated in the front. I hear Frank's shrill whistle as the train starts and his lusty cry of "London! Train starting for London!" His shout recalls to my mind the wee baby in the cradle, and I turn instinctively to see if the noise has disturbed his peace, but he is still sleeping; yet I remember that only yesterday Frank woke him up with his noise and that Baby was fretful all the morning in consequence; so I tell Frank to play as quietly as possible. Numberless thoughts and impressions fill my mind even in those few moments as I cross the room. I open the cupboard and begin to take out their clothes, and as I lift them out I think to myself: "It is a nice morning for the children to go to see their Granny; I will put on their better coats; she likes to see them looking dainty." Granny, and the mental picture of the children, recalls a further thought, that last time Granny met us she had remarked how badly Jessie's new coat had worn. In a flash of memory, I mentally compare that coat with one belonging to historic times which I myself had worn in childhood, which refused to look shabby, and which at last had been cut up and made into a cloak for my doll when I grew older! I must not forget, I say to myself, coming back to the coat beside me, to avoid buying that material again. So, as I proceed mechanically with my special occupation, my thoughts run on—my senses are alert, through them I am all the time receiving impressions; but memories, emotions, and sensations connected with my own body, my movements or my inactivity, my comfort or discomfort, all these are at the same time present in my mind.

*Our minds are never empty during waking hours, some kind of consciousness is always going on. This consciousness is not simple but complex; not a mere trickle of thoughts entering our minds one after the other, like beads threaded upon a string, but a full stream of conscious life. At any one moment the contents of our minds, our field of consciousness at that moment, contain im-*

*pressions received through the senses, memories of things which have happened in the past, recollections of objects which are not beside us at that time, emotions due to the circumstances of the moment or something quite outside ourselves, impressions of bodily movement or inactivity, of comfort or the reverse, these together forming a whole, which is our "field or state of consciousness," the contents of our minds at that particular moment.*

If Baby Molly suddenly choked as the result of trying to swallow some of the Teddy bear's fur—if Jessie fell as she was climbing on to her seat in the train—the emotion of anxiety, of compassion or fear, would at once predominate in my consciousness, appearing, for the time being, to determine exclusively the course of thought. But this is not the case. The other children are not entirely forgotten. Even while I am attending to Molly, other sounds are not unheard, I am not blind to all other sights. If I am comforting Jessie, and the thought of her trouble occupies my mind at that moment more than anything else, yet I still hear, though less distinctly, Frank's noisy shouts or see his sympathetic face; I do not wholly forget the sleeping baby, as I strive to quiet Jessie's sobs. The recollection of objects seen a few days ago in our walks comes back to me, and I try to distract her by suggesting that we shall go and see if the steam engine is still puffing up and down in the road not far off!

*The proportion of the different elements in our mind sensations of touch or sight or hearing - of memories, of emotions, etc.—varies from time to time, according to circumstances. When the emotion of fear predominates, we get what we speak of as a state of fear, when we are conscious of but little else; when circumstances puzzle us and we know not what to do, our minds seem so filled with the feeling of perplexity that everything else escapes our attention; at times we are lost in memories and appear wholly oblivious*

to all that is going on around. But to some slight extent, the different elements are almost invariably present, although one preponderating element may be standing out more clearly in consciousness than the others. The contents of our minds are always complex; one element never occupies the whole of our consciousness.

Yet, at any moment, there is generally something in our minds which stands out more clearly than the rest, of which we are most distinctly conscious. This we speak of as the *focus of consciousness*; the rest constitutes the *margin*. Sometimes we are almost as vividly aware of some things in the margin as we are of the focus; attention then tends to become dispersed. Of other things in the margin we are generally less conscious; of some, we are hardly definitely conscious at all.

Thus, thoughts connected with the clothes were in the focus of my mind as I stood by the cupboard. Jessie, Frank and Molly were at that moment attracting less attention, though perhaps not much less; the noises outside in the street, the sound of anyone passing on the landing, the fire in the hearth, were in the dimmest margin of my consciousness. If, however, Jessie had run across the room to throw something in the fire, the fire would immediately share the focus with Jessie; if I had suddenly remembered that I had forgotten to give a message to the cook, and steps were heard outside the door, the footsteps, which might possibly belong to cook, would then be immediately in the focus and the clothes would retire into the margin.

*Whatever occupies the focus one second may not occupy it the next. Consciousness changes from moment to moment.*

It may seem occasionally as if this change in the contents of our minds were sudden or complete.

Such a break is only apparent. Whether the sudden change of thought is due to some fresh element not before in consciousness, or whether that which is at one moment in the centre of consciousness is suddenly thrust into the dimmest margin, and what was before in the margin becomes the focus, in any case the change is partial only; the surroundings of the room, our bodily feelings, our vague sensations of light, of sound, of temperature, those dim elements in our thoughts connected with our past experiences—all this is unchanged.

*Consciousness may and does change from moment to moment; yet it is a continuous stream, and has for its possessor a unity and individuality of its own.*

What determines the change which takes place in consciousness? Are we merely receptive? Is field after field unrolled before us as picture melts into picture in the cinematograph? The screen is passive: *our minds are living, active and selective. An impelling force, an urge, within us largely colours and even determines that which happens in our minds.*

We may compare the contents of our minds to the contents of a tank.<sup>1</sup> Across the tank, at different heights, are placed sieves of varying coarseness of mesh. The coarseness of the mesh varies according to the degree of our attention. The topmost layer of the tank contains those ideas which are foremost in our mind at any moment: we speak of them as being in the focus of our consciousness. The next layer contains other less vivid ideas which are in our mind at the same moment. these are said to be in the margin of our consciousness. These two layers together make up our field of consciousness. When our attention is concentrated on some particular matter, the "sieve" separating focus from margin is so adjusted as to permit only ideas connected with

<sup>1</sup> The analogy is used in "The Machinery of the Mind,"  
V. M. Firth.

that matter passing into the focus: all other ideas are kept out. It is essential, while we are with the children in the nursery, that the sieve should be kept widely open; we must be attentive to all that is going on around us.

What decided me to take the children to see their Granny on that particular morning? What determined my method of treating Molly or Jessie in their distress? The thought of seeing Granny seemed suddenly to flash through my mind as I was looking at the coats; I did not definitely remember how long it was since the children had seen her last, yet I had an impression that it was about time they went again. I dimly recalled that last time I went with them I felt, after coming away, that Granny was disappointed that the children did not go oftener, though she had said nothing of the kind. All this was, however, vague and only momentarily in my mind—I made no deliberate decision. Who can say after all why many of the things we do in this way are done?

When Jessie hurt herself I did not stop to think how I should comfort her before acting. By instinct, as it were, I deal with her in one way and with Frank and Molly in another, not so much as the result of my recently acquired experience, as of numberless past experiences of which I am no longer conscious. These experiences have been buried in deeper layers of the mind.

Two still lower levels of the mind have been described—that of sub- or fore-consciousness and that of the Unconscious. All the ideas and experiences which we can voluntarily recall, but are not thinking about at any particular time, are said to be in sub-consciousness. Sub-consciousness, *the level of recallable memories*, is separated from the margin of active consciousness by another "sieve" which we are also able to control by means of attention.

Below the level of the sub-conscious, there is a lower

level yet—the Unconscious. All the varied processes which go on automatically within our bodies—digestion, circulation, etc.—are said to be under the control of the unconscious mind. In the Unconscious lie forgotten and buried memories—pleasant and unpleasant—which, without our knowledge, profoundly influence our conscious life. In the Unconscious are hidden impulses to action, which have not yet risen to consciousness, but which are the seeds of future behaviour—noble and ignoble. The “sieve” which divides the lowest level of the mind is not alterable under normal conditions. The unconscious mind manifests itself in dreams—sleeping or waking—and in the motives and ideals which determine our actions. Its emotional element may profoundly influence our conscious life, but its contents cannot be drawn *voluntarily* into the focus or margin of consciousness. By the practice of “suggestion,” we can influence our motives and ideas, which then seem to arise spontaneously—that is, without any effort of will.

THE CHILD'S MIND

Such are the broad psychological facts which it is necessary for us to grasp in considering the contents of the mind. At what stage in the child's development are they equally descriptive of the child-mind? And if they apply equally to him, what points of practical importance issue from them?

The conscious mind of the tiny infant holds nothing more than a vague mass of indistinguishable sensations and feelings. Through his various sense organs, his eyes, his ears, his nose, his sense of touch, passively he receives numberless sense impressions; but he has as yet no power to discriminate amongst them, memory is very weak, there is nothing in consciousness which corresponds to a clear thought. Occasionally, when one or another impression is more intense than the rest,

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he more definitely responds—stretching out arms and legs to receive the warmth of the fire, fixing his eyes on the central point of light when the gas is lit. But that is all—he lives entirely in the present. Our complex consciousness, our distinction between focus and margin, our capacity voluntarily to recall the past is not yet his. But only a very short time passes before we detect the beginnings of growth. I hold a tiny baby in my arms, his head resting against my cheek; and, at once, he moves his head this way and that, as if in the search of food. A definite impression has evidently been made upon his mind; he already associates the feeling of warm flesh with the pleasure of a meal! I pour the warm water into the bath, the baby hears the sound, and as soon as I pick him up, he kicks and crows in his delight. The sound of the water has evidently aroused memories, memories which are associated with the joyful sense of nakedness in front of the fire and the splash of the warm water.

When this occurs, the mind of the baby, like that of the grown-up person, already contains recognized sensations received from objects around, and memories connected with such sensations. The baby himself cannot yet distinguish between the two, but the distinction is there and clearly marked. Discrimination has begun, the vague is becoming definite.

How the child-mind develops from the vague simplicity of infant life into the definiteness and complexity of babyhood and childhood will concern us in the chapter on mental growth. Sensations gradually become clear and are associated together; some impressions, often charged with emotion, are retained and stored up in the memory; others, apparently forgotten, are stored up in the unconscious mind; the child's knowledge of the outside world and of his own body as distinguished from other bodies, his knowledge of the connexion of events, bit by bit grow wider and more clearly defined, until,



at three to five years old, the contents of his mind in many points resemble our own.

John, five years of age, is building in a corner of the nursery with his bricks, all his mind is concentrated on making this castle the finest ever built. He is dimly aware that it is nearly dinner-time, for he is getting hungry, he can see that Peggy and Martha are playing with their dolls on the other side of the room and that Nurse is feeding Baby and singing to him the while. He has a vague sense of uneasiness that Nurse will tell him to stop in a minute and go to wash his hands for dinner, and he is full of eager haste to finish this one block of the building first. With his mind's eye, he pictures a castle of bricks which he once saw in a shop window, and which he is now trying to copy, and he wonders if, when he has finished, Nurse will let him leave his castle in the corner for Mother to see. He hears a sound of galloping horses outside in the road, Peggy and Martha run to the window, but John keeps on at his occupation.

His mind is infinitely fuller of thought than it was when he lay in his cradle only a few years ago, just beginning to discriminate between his different sensations. All his sensations have now become more definite; his emotions are largely associated with his memories of things gone by, and no longer solely with the physical sensation of the moment, as in infancy. At any one moment, his mind now contains impressions of things outside, feelings connected with self, emotions and memories both definite and vague. Some things are most distinct in his mind, occupying the focus, e.g., all that is connected with his castle; other things are less distinct, e.g., the doings of the other children, of some things he is barely conscious, such as the sounds in the street.

Suddenly there is a cry from Peggy; Martha has taken away the dear dolly which Peggy was just tucking up in bed. Nurse turns to reprove Martha; John stops his building at once and runs across to

comfort his sister. The castle has gone from the focus of his consciousness; perhaps for the moment it has been completely forgotten. The noises outside, the feeling of hunger, all are in the dimmest margin of his mind; his attention is now wholly concentrated on Peggy.

But we have not yet fully explored John's mind. A few hours later and he is tucked up in bed, left to go to sleep in the darkness; the baby is asleep in the same room. Lest she should not hear the moment the baby wakes, Nurse has left the bedroom door slightly ajar. "Please, Nurse, shut the door, I don't like the door open," John pleads. Every night, for weeks past, he has begged that the door should be shut; every night, though Nurse is sorry, she feels obliged to refuse. Afraid in the darkness, because of that open door, John cowers down under the bedclothes, only to start up every few moments when some fancied muffled sound reaches him in his hiding-place. Why is he afraid? Why would his fears vanish if the bedroom door were only tightly shut? All fear of the dark disappeared a few days later when the experiment was tried of putting him to sleep in a room by himself so that the door could be shut! John himself could not have told why he was afraid. Buried in the deepest layer of his mind, beyond his power to recall, is a fear of cows,<sup>1</sup> the result of meeting a number of them a few months before in a narrow street, when in the company of a grown person who was herself afraid. At the sight of the cows, in urgent haste, she had dragged the child into an adjacent shop, closing the door in her agitation. To the child, it was a *poignant experience charged with emotion*. He had never spoken of it afterwards: to all intents and purposes, the experience had been forgotten. But the fear of the open door was directly traceable to a fear lest "the cows should come in" if the door was not shut!

<sup>1</sup> A hidden fear of this nature is described by Dr. Hutchinson, "The Child and his Problems."

His mind then is similar to our own. There is the same stream of thought, the same complex field of consciousness with its focus and its margin, the same varying elements due to sensations and to memories, the same continuity, the same special chain of experiences belonging to him, which makes his stream of consciousness his and his alone, the same store of forgotten or buried memories and hidden impulses to action. The only difference between his mind and ours lies in the greater clearness of our sense perceptions compared with his, the increased store of our memories—conscious and unconscious—owing to our wider experience, our larger store of abstract ideas due to language and personal development, and our greater power of control over the contents of our consciousness, owing to our capacity for voluntarily concentrating our attention.

#### PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTS

The psychological facts laid down as descriptive of the grown mind are then equally descriptive of the child's mind. In what way does a grasp of such facts help us practically in dealing with the children?

Nurse is busy putting the younger children to bed. For a while longer, John is allowed to play in the nursery. His soldiers are set out on the table in battle array, and he is intent upon his game. Nurse looks in for a moment to tell him to clear up at once as it is nearly his bed-time. In a few minutes she returns, but the soldiers are still fighting their battles and are not put away. John is reproofed for disobedience, and goes to bed in disgrace. Now, *he may have deliberately disobeyed*, choosing to continue his game rather than do what he was told. *But it may also be that, when Nurse spoke to him, the focus of his mind was so entirely occupied with his plan of campaign, that her words never got beyond the margin of his consciousness.* For a moment they lingered in the dimmest margin,

and then they ceased to be part of his consciousness at all. If so, he had forgotten; but he had not intentionally disobeyed. *Or it may even be that his attention was so wholly concentrated on his soldiers that he never heard Nurse speak at all*, in which case he did not even forget. Was it not Nurse's business to see that he gave her his full attention when she spoke to him, so that her commands should enter the focus of his mind and have the best chance of being obeyed? "Stop your game a minute, laddie, and listen to me," she might say. He looks up from his soldiers, Nurse is in the focus and the toys have had to withdraw into the margin. Then she adds: "In a few minutes it is your bed-time, so the battle must finish for to-night and you must clear up at once."

Again, let us suppose that Peggy is learning to get herself ready to go out for a walk. Boots in hand, she sits upon the floor—but the nursery is so full of things which are interesting to watch! Nurse is dressing Baby, the kitten is playing on the hearth, John is riding on the rocking-horse; everything is interesting, but those boots! "Don't look about you all the time, put on your boots, Miss Peggy," she hears Nurse say. "You are forgetting your boots again; never mind the kitten, do pay attention to what you are supposed to be doing." In vain Nurse tries to make her quick; Peggy persistently dawdles. Where does the fault in all probability lie? Keeping the same thing in the focus of her mind for long at a time, especially anything as uninteresting as boots, is an effort which she is not yet capable of making. The world is full of interest for her, and whatever strays into the margin of her consciousness, whether John, the baby, or the kitten, tends at once to usurp the place of whatever was originally in the focus. She is wanting in the power of concentration, and scolding alone will not cure her. What she has to do, in the first place, is to acquire the habit of fixing her attention on what-

ever she is doing, whether interesting or uninteresting. We must see that her toys are played with properly and not changed every few minutes from lack of absorption, that they are not scattered about unheeded on the floor, that her dolly is properly "mothered," and not hugged one minute and forgotten the next. She can play at being our "errand boy," and learn to run messages accurately without stopping to dawdle by the "road side." She can play at school, and in cutting out, paper folding, drilling exercises, learn to give her mind to simple tasks.

In various ways we must develop her power of concentrating her attention. The concentration, practised and strengthened in games, will help her to attend to less interesting tasks.

But while the effort of concentration is still great, we need to make it easier for her to fix her attention on duties which are dull and hard, when such duties have to be done. For the time, she must be removed from distracting interests. If she puts on her boots behind the screen in the day nursery, she can see nothing which will tempt her to dawdle, or if she goes by herself in a corner of the night nursery away from the window, on the understanding that the boots must be put on in a given time, the task will be more quickly accomplished. The one thought—boots—can then be kept clearly in the focus of her consciousness, the marginal interests which tended to drive the boots out of this central place are diminished, and at the same time, in other ways, her power of attention is being developed. *The greater the capacity of the child to observe and to be interested in all that goes on around, the greater the difficulty in learning to attend to any one thing in particular; and therefore the greater the necessity of deliberately training the power of concentration*

Jessie and Frank are playing trains in the nursery and Nurse is sewing beside them. She is called

downstairs for a minute and, as she leaves the room, it occurs to her to turn back for a moment to tell the children on no account to touch or go anywhere near the fire! They had been absorbed in their game, but a new thought has been suggested to them, which, in Frank's active brain, quickly merges with the thoughts of the train—no idea lies fallow in his mind for long!

"Jessie, we don't need to go near the fire, but if there were only a blaze, we could pretend that the prairie was on fire and we had to pass through it at the risk of our lives!" As he expresses the thought in words, its hold upon him increases. "Let's poke it to make a blaze; *that* can't hurt." If Nurse had said nothing, the children might have gone on with their game, and the thought of the fire would never have entered their heads. But, into the margin of their minds, filled before almost completely with the interest of imaginary journeys, she had introduced a disturbing thought—disturbing, that is, to Frank, whose vitality was considerably, as yet, in excess of his desire to obey.

There is a certain type of child, easily recognizable, generally a boy, in whom action rapidly follows thought. Directly an idea enters, or is put into, the focus of his consciousness, he starts to put it into action, without stopping to consider the ultimate consequences of what he is doing. Sometimes the mere forbidding of an action is sufficient to arouse in him a desire for that action. He is the *bête noire* of a house-proud mother. As he comes along the hall, she calls to him not to slide "as it was polished to-day"; and as soon as the thought is suggested, his feet itch to slide! He stands looking out of the window rather near the glass, someone tells him not to breathe on the window as it makes it dirty; and he longs to breathe all over it! Not grasping the tendency of his nature, we are all the time suggesting actions to him, which would not otherwise have occurred to him, and we make him more

troublesome by our constant injunctions. In dealing with such "motor" types of children, "Don't say don't," is the first maxim which we should lay to heart. *The motor energy, the desire to shape thought in action, is good, what is wanting is the power to stop, to consider and to judge.*

Mary, five years old, and little Ralph, aged two, are out for a walk with Nurse. A big St. Bernard comes up to them—greatly to Ralph's delight and to Mary's terror. "Well, Miss Mary," says Nurse, "I would be ashamed to be so frightened if I were you. Just look at your little brother, and he only two years old, and you a big girl." Is Nurse fair in her judgment? As it happens, Ralph has stayed with an aunt who has a big dog similar to this one; a dog, who was his chief playmate all the while he was there; Mary, though older, has never stayed with that aunt, she has never lived in the house with a dog of any kind, and once she heard, and never could forget, the story of a child who was bitten. How could she, with her small experience, judge which were the biting, and which the gentle, dogs? The contents of Mary's mind on the subject of dogs differed, then, from that of Ralph's; she was therefore timid, when he knew no fear. *What we do is the result of our natural impulses to action, to a large extent modified by the contents of our consciousness.* Then the child's action under certain circumstances will necessarily differ from that of the grown-up person, different actions will be natural to different children. *The contents of their consciousness, not ours; their experience and not ours, determines their attitude; we need to understand their point of view.*

"I met a lion in the road," Robin stoutly declares: Robin is four and lives in a village in England. "My mother has jewels, and necklaces, and lots of dresses, and furs, and we're going to have a motor-car soon!"

boasts Florence. Florence is an only child, six years old, and her mother is far from rich. Neither Robin nor Florence are *intentionally* untruthful. Behind their untruths lay an urgent motive of which they were wholly unconscious—their desire to be superior to compensate for their realization that, in so many ways, they were inferior. If we grown folk prove to the children that such statements are wrong, if we blame the children for “telling untruths,” what will be the result? The deepening of the consciousness of inferiority which the very telling of such untruths has already proved to be strong in them. There is nothing wrong in their desire to be of importance: the wrong lies in the way in which importance is attained. *Our part is to realize the nature and the strength of the unconscious motive within them and provide an outlet which is reasonable and right.*

I have given only a few typical instances of difficulties in which we are helped to a better understanding of the children by a grasp of the elementary facts of the psychology of the child's mind. The focus and margin of the field of consciousness, the shifting of the focal and of the marginal elements, the part played by memory in the contents of consciousness and its influence upon action, the unity and individuality of the stream of consciousness, the potent influence of memories hidden in the unconscious, are not facts which concern only the student of psychology, they concern those who are actually handling the children, whether in home or school.



## CHAPTER III

### THE GROWTH OF THE CHILD'S MIND

The field of consciousness of the infant, a vague mass of undistinguished sensations—Repetition of experiences—Retention and gradual recognition—At first, the infant *passively* receives impressions, later, he *actively* explores and experiments—By observation, memory and comparison, he acquires knowledge of shape, size, substance, etc., and of the different "objects" about him—Apperception—Aid of language in the growth of knowledge—Summary of the main psychological facts underlying mental growth—Connexion between memory and emotion—Interest, the connecting link between memory and attention—Voluntary and involuntary attention—Bearing of psychology on practical details of a child's life—Memory is increased by repetition, provided that attention is paid, or some interest taken—The strain of attending is less when the child is interested, it is therefore desirable to get him interested in what we want him to do—Fresh interests can be created, when necessary, by working on the lines of the child's natural interests—Sustained attention involves strain and therefore results in fatigue—The strain of sustained and voluntary attention is greater in the midst of distracting influences—The effort of attention is easier when the brain is fresh—The habit of attention can be deliberately cultivated—Just as attention to what is helpful can be cultivated so can inattention to what is hurtful or useless—The cumulative effect of small unpleasant experiences may lead to the creation of a "hidden complex."

AN infant of a few days old lies awake in his cradle. His eyes are capable of receiving sensations of light and colour, his ears are prepared to receive sensations of sound, he is sensitive to touch and sensations of warmth, but he has as yet no power to distinguish between the impressions which he receives. His mental consciousness is due to one vague mass of undistinguished sensations, producing in him a vague feeling of general comfort or discomfort, and nothing more. None of his impressions are definite, he understands nothing. Memory plays small part in his

mental life. At this particular moment, he is feeling comfortable—cosily wrapped in his blankets, awakened from a refreshing sleep, and not yet conscious of hunger. But his meal time is approaching, and a vague sense of uneasiness is entering into and colouring the whole of his consciousness. This feeling of discomfort increases, until he begins to cry loudly and move his arms and legs energetically in his distress. Instinctively he calls for food, though he does not yet know that hunger is the cause of his misery. But Mother is close at hand. Some one stoops over him, vaguely modifying his mental consciousness by the action. He feels himself lifted up in strong, warm arms, receiving an impression of movement, which somehow gives him momentary comfort, he knows not why. He feels his head lying against something soft and warm. He smells a faint, sweet smell. In response to these vague impressions, he turns his head this way and that, instinctively seeking for relief. His mouth comes in contact with his mother's breast, and he sucks. A new impression of taste mingles with the vague mass of impressions already in consciousness, and a feeling of profound comfort steals over him. All movement is stilled. All cries cease. Absorbed in the process of feeding, motionless he lies, one tiny fist clasped close to his breast.

Such an experience is repeated for him at regular intervals day and night. Always the same order in the vague series of sense impressions, passively received and invariably registered on his brain—comfort, which gradually changes into discomfort, which is in its turn instantaneously relieved, after a certain touch, a certain smell, a certain voice, enters into his dim field of consciousness.

Gradually, as one might expect, certain links in this wonderful chain of events begin to stand out with some degree of definiteness; certain of these sense impressions begin to be recognized. After a very few

weeks of such repeated experiences, the hungry baby will cease his crying for a moment when he hears his mother's voice, showing in this way that he recognizes and associates the sound with the removal of his distress. If we hold him in our arms with his tiny face cuddled up close against ours, he will move his little head to and fro in the vain search for food, showing that he has further learnt to recognize the feeling of warm flesh and to connect that too with the process of feeding.

The first few weeks of his infant life are made up almost wholly of similar groups of experiences, repeated in the same order and at the same time. He sleeps, he wakes, suffers hunger, is fed, sleeps again. The bath is prepared, he is lifted out of his cradle, undressed, washed, dressed and again put back to bed. He is taken up, dressed in outdoor garments, put into a perambulator, and, as he is wheeled along, he falls off again to sleep.

*At intervals these different series of sense impressions are registered in the cells of his brain ; at each repetition this register becomes, as it were, clearer and more permanent ; until the infant shows by his actions, though he has as yet no power of definite self-expression, that sensations, in steadily increasing numbers, are recognized, both in themselves and as links in familiar chains of experience, and that he therefore expects his life to be the same from day to day, and resents any arbitrary interference with the regular routine of events. The sight of the bath, the sound of the flowing water, the sensation of being lifted, forms, for instance, one of such clearly recognized sequences, a sequence which probably arouses in him a feeling of gladness, associated with the dimly remembered joy of nakedness in front of the fire, of splashing in the warm water. The sight of the out-door garments, the feeling of being lifted up at that particular time in the morning when he always goes out for his walk, is another of such remembered sequences ; and he shows pleasure or*

distress, when the sequence begins, according as the delight of being in the fresh air outweighs or does not outweigh, for him, the discomfort involved in being dressed ready to go. Memory is already beginning to play an important part in his mental life, some impressions are clear and definite, he begins to *know* some things.

But so far he has been a mere passive spectator of what went on around him, attending only to what definitely concerned himself. Some impressions, for instance, the bright gas-light, or the sound of music, he received with close attention; they interested him, even before he understood them. Some he attended to less closely, and these he remembers less vividly.

Even while he thus passively receives impressions, wonderful discoveries are at hand, which serve, young as he is, to enlarge his mental horizon. When he is about three months old, as he lies in his cradle one day, moving arms and legs in that purposeless way which is Nature's method of providing him with the active exercise which he needs, his hand comes in contact with some tiny bells, which, to amuse him, Nurse has hung above him. He touches them and they move; swinging back and forth, and tinkling as they swing! He had seen Nurse move them before, he had laughed and crowed in his delight then--but now! In his excitement he works his arms vigorously; again he touches the bells, again they swing--and it slowly dawns upon him, though he could not so express it, that it is in his power to "play with" those bells! Every baby, in his turn, experiences just such a transport of delight the first time he learns by chance to "play." Rejoicing in his newly discovered powers, Baby lies happily for hours pulling, shaking, moving whatever is within his reach. He has as yet no knowledge of distance, of weight, of matter, but he can now turn his new powers to account. He is no longer merely a passive spectator. He can actively explore the world around him, handling, biting,

sucking, shaking, pulling at everything, and so gathering impressions which later he can contrast and compare, and by means of which he will learn. Now, at every turn, he comes upon some fresh experience. It was soothing to his gums to bite his india-rubber horse, pleasant to knock it against his face. Bobbie gives him a brick to play with, he sucks that, knocks with that, and the result is painful. He *knows* neither "horse" nor "brick"—but he has *experienced the contrasting sensations* to be got from "soft" things and "hard," from things which are round and things which have sharp corners. In front of him he sees a bright red, wool ball, he stretches out his hand, and feels a soft something which he pulls towards his mouth and bites. Then something brighter still, the gas, catches his eye; out goes the tiny hand again, but in response to his movement, he feels nothing, there is nothing there which he can pull towards him! For the first time, maybe, he involuntarily compares the different impressions given by things which are "far off," and which are "near by." His hands clasp the bottle as he feeds, and for a moment he receives a pleasant sensation of warmth; he takes his hand off the bottle to catch at Nurse's watch, which is ticking above him. A new and contrasting sensation—of cold—is experienced. He puts his toes, instead of the horse, into his mouth; in the one case, he experiences a double sensation in mouth and foot, in the other case, only a sensation in his mouth. What can this mean? He bites Nurse's finger, and enjoys it; he bites his own equally hard, and, to his surprise, feels a pain in his finger, which outbalances the pleasurable feeling in his gums! He pulls his toes towards him just as he was accustomed to pull at his rattle or his bottle—his toes seem to pull back against him as it were, but the rattle or the bottle he could easily raise to his mouth. He begins to learn that his own body is part of himself—that all else belongs to the world outside.

Gradually, in this way, by comparing his various experiences, he acquires ideas of things, their sizes and shapes, and, grouping them together, he begins to form some conception of the outer world and of the various "things" which he sees around him. His india-rubber horse, for instance, is one of those "things," a definite group of impressions of coldness, softness to bite, etc.; Nurse is another of those "things"—but very different from the horse. She moves, it remains still; her face changes, the horse is always the same, and so forth. As he compares different objects, he involuntarily puts them into general groups.

Such groups are at first indefinite, for he is as yet only capable of appreciating a very general likeness. "Daddy," for instance, is seen by him as a simple "object" in garments of a certain shape, in voice, manner and appearance giving a certain general impression associated with manhood. Consequently, all men are grouped together under the general term of "Daddy." All four-footed animals are classed as "gee-gees" or "how-wows." Gradually, with closer discrimination, these groups are broken up into smaller ones. A horse and a dog are now distinguished one from the other, but a sheep may be still confused with a dog, and a donkey with a horse.

What happens when some wholly new object enters into the child's experience?—as when an egg in its shell, an aeroplane, ducks in flight, are seen for the first time? Directly the new impression is received in consciousness it is associated with some other impression already there which resembles it more closely than anything else which he has met with so far. In this way the child adjusts himself to the new experience. Thus, an orange seen for the first time, he calls a "pitty ball"; an egg, a "pitty potato"; an aeroplane, a "mo-mo (motor) in the 'ky"; ducks in flight he describes as being "blowed away"; a hill he sees as "a field with its back up," and so forth. This method of absorbing and

digesting new experiences by associating the new with the old is spoken of as "apperception." Every impression falls into a mind already stored with memories, ideas, interests and emotions—not into an empty mind waiting, as it were, to receive it. This fully stored mind receives and digests the impression, blending new and old into one indivisible whole.

The process of analyzing, comparing and absorbing new impressions is accelerated by the use of words on the part of the grown-up people around him. Words help him to put his otherwise vague conceptions into definite form. High, heavy, hard, large, etc., he associates with certain definite sensations, Nurse, Bobby, Mother, bath, bottle, with certain groups of impressions clear in his mind. The "pitty ball" which possesses a certain colour and a certain smell, from which Nurse squeezes out a drink which tastes so good, is called an "orange." The "pitty potato," off which Nurse cuts the top, is called an "egg." It is hardly possible to overestimate the extent to which the child's mental growth, due in the first place to his own powers of observation, of retention, of discrimination and of comparison, is stimulated by the hearing and use of words. "*Now*, Baby, bath time," he hears Nurse say, and he is conscious of being lifted up *at once* and prepared for his bath. "*Bottle time now*, Baby," and again the bottle is *at once* at hand. He cries to be nursed, "*Not now*," he hears Nurse say, as she bends over him. He cries for more food when the bottle is empty "*Not now*," he hears again, and he gets no more. "*In a minute*" or "*Soon*," and he has not long to wait for the satisfaction of his desires; but "*Not to-day*, Baby," has a far different meaning. Always these grown-ups use the same words to correspond with the same definite experiences, and ideas of time and space and matter begin to acquire a place and meaning in the child's mental life. So his knowledge of the material world grows and his mind expands.

But all this time his physical powers are developing ; he can now talk and question, walk and climb. As the opportunities for mental growth possessed by one who never leaves the place of his birth are to those of one who travels from place to place ; so are the baby's opportunities of learning before and after he can walk by himself. An infinitely larger world is now within his reach, which he is free to explore ; but the process of adding to his knowledge is ever the same—observation, recollection, comparison.

Yet mental development cannot be fully explained by experience : there is a selective process by which it proceeds and upon which progress depends. Field after field is not, as we saw, unrolled before us as picture melts into picture in the cinematograph. *An inner "urge" largely colours and even determines that which enters into our minds. This "urge" is due to an inner stream of energy working along the lines of our natural instincts.* According to the strength and nature of these instincts, as far as lies in his power, the child colours and determines the experiences which shall enter into his mind.

What are the main psychological facts underlying this mental growth ?

(1) The child's mind, from the first, possesses a certain power of retention and of voluntary recall, which we speak of as memory. By this power, impressions are registered and combined together more or less permanently in his mind and are readily available for use. Every time an impression is received, some change occurs in the nerve-cells and fibres of the brain ; it therefore follows that *the more frequently an impression is repeated, the more likely it is to be remembered, and capable of being voluntarily recalled.*

(2) Feeling is also closely associated with memory. If breast-fed, so that his mother is in these early weeks the chief source of his delight, her voice, her face,



etc., are recognized more quickly by the baby than anything else which he hears or sees. If bottle-fed, the sounds associated with the preparing of the bottle are more quickly recognized by him, and the voice and look of the one who habitually feeds him; that is, we find that, *although all impressions are retained to a greater or less extent, those memories are the most persistent which are most closely associated with feeling.*

(3) Some impressions, e.g., those connected with feeding, bathing, etc., arouse interest in the child, whether pleasurable or painful—if the latter, he spontaneously turns from them to avoid them; if the former, he turns towards them in the effort, at first unconscious, to retain them. Because they arouse his intelligent interest, he attends to them without effort of will. In other matters, we often have to find a way by which we can engage his attention, e.g., when we are training him to be clean and regular in his habits.

*Interest is the connecting link between memory and attention. When he is not naturally interested, we want, whenever possible, by some means or other, to create an interest. For if he is interested, he pays more attention and attends with less effort, a deeper impression is made upon his memory, and his knowledge increases more rapidly.*

(4) What is Attention? Observe closely our own mental operations. We notice that, when we attend, the whole of our consciousness seems to be taken up with one thing, the rest is in the margin; and further, that the attention which we pay is of two kinds, voluntary and involuntary. *Voluntary attention is deliberate, and we are conscious of strain and effort. We are forced to attend voluntarily to objects which are less interesting, for the sake of something else. Involuntary attention is spontaneous and we are conscious of no such effort of will. Involuntary attention is the basis of the voluntary. Sustained and continuous attention is difficult, when the subject matter is not*

interesting, even for grown people, and demands considerable self-control. Much greater then must be the difficulty in childhood. Moreover, our minds tend to wander from the point, unless there is constant change in that to which we are attending, or in the point of view from which we are regarding it. To fix our attention persistently on one spot of light, for instance, is extremely difficult, but we can, with less difficulty, keep our attention on the flower we are dissecting, or the piece of architecture we are observing, because the range of attention is not too limited. It permits a certain range of movement, and so diminishes fatigue.

Let us suppose, in our own case, that we possess a total lack of interest in the subject to which we are called upon to attend, combined with a very great interest at the same time in other subjects; then, while such a state of things continues, sustained voluntary attention is practically impossible. We can only make repeated efforts to exclude from our minds those things which naturally interest us, thus giving the things which are as yet uninteresting a chance to engage our attention. Gradually, in all probability, the uninteresting subject will gain in interest, and the latter lose; until the effort to attend becomes less and less difficult. Many of the things to which we have to try and make the children attend are, for them, similarly lacking in interest, while the world of life outside, or the world of their own imaginings, they find all absorbing. This fact we tend to forget. We cannot *force* children to attend. As with ourselves, so with the child, the "mental sieve" which separates focus and margin is regulated and controlled from within. We can insist upon, and may gain, an outward appearance of attention, but we cannot command real attention. The only thing we can do is to *try and secure attention by the rousing of the child's interest.*

(5) We have seen that an inner "urge," which was the expression of the child's natural instincts, to a

large extent coloured and determined the experiences which entered into his mind. As these experiences enter, they fall involuntarily into groups, clustering around some central idea, just as the contrasting impressions of shape, size, surface, temperature, etc., which the child experienced, fell into groups corresponding to the special "objects" he saw around him—his bath, his bottle, his india-rubber horse, etc. Thus, his experiences with his mother—her "healing hand," which comforts him after a fall; her voice, which soothes him when he wakes frightened in the dark; the distress in her face, which troubles him when he has been unkind to his baby sister and so forth—all these are gradually welded into one by the "cement" of the corresponding emotion, forming a group of remembered experiences, distinct from all other groups. Other experiences group themselves around his thought of his father, his thought of bedtime, of walks out of doors, of playtime in the nursery and so forth. When such groups, compounded of ideas—partly conscious, partly unconscious—and bound together by a special emotion, become strongly marked, with an individuality of their own, they are spoken of as "complexes," or "sentiments" (McDougall). There is evidence, Dr. Rivers states, that an arresting experience, accompanied by poignant emotion, can lie wholly dormant in the unconscious mind, yet exercising a potent influence of which we are unaware. In the same way, the cumulative effect of *small* deprivations of natural desires, *small* misunderstandings, can create in the Unconscious a group of ideas, held together by unpleasant emotion, forming a powerful, even though unconscious, motive to thought and action. Such groups, existing only in the unconscious mind are spoken of as "buried" or "hidden" complexes.

It is by the free play of "complexes" or "sentiments" with one another that the mental balance is preserved upon which health and happiness so largely depend. There can be no such free play

in the case of "buried complexes" which exist only in the Unconscious.

#### PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTS

What is the bearing of these elementary principles of psychology on our method of dealing with the children?

Neville learns his dates or his multiplication table by constant repetition, until the more or less uninteresting details are firmly impressed upon his mind. Yet every day, and at every meal, repeatedly we have to tell him to keep his arms off the table, and he always forgets! Where is the difference?

Memory is, as I have said, improved by repetition, but only when attention is paid; and in daily life, we forget that often no attention is being paid. If Neville paid as little attention to the repetition of his dates as to the details of his behaviour at meals, learning would be a very tedious process. Interest and attention must be combined with the process of repetition; the child must put himself into whatever he is doing, and not merely listen or repeat mechanically.

How can we make use of this psychological fact? Instead of constantly telling Neville to put his arms down and nothing more, suppose we drill him in the right action! "Arms on the table, arms off!"—"On, off—on, off"—briskly, six times, while he suits the action to the words, and gives for the time his whole attention to the arm exercises. Then, reminding him that if he forgets again he will have to practise sitting with his hands under the table for a few minutes when the meal is over—till he *does* remember, we make repetition effective because no longer mechanical. It is *mere* repetition which dulls the interest and leads to inattention, so that the impression hardly enters into consciousness—attention must be paid all the time, interest kept up. It is a good working rule never to repeat an order in exactly the same words, for even

verbal variety helps to keep repetition from becoming wholly mechanical.

There are laws which govern interest. The time has come when Norman should learn to dress himself ; but the task is difficult and uninteresting. The buttons will *not* go through the holes ; every now and again, just when they seem as if they are really through, out they slip again ; and his fingers grow weary and he himself is tired of attending. The task is so dull and the effort so great ! What is the good after all of his struggling with the buttons when Nurse can do them so easily ? She can do them up in a minute without stopping to think ; he has to fix his attention on them ever so hard and for ever so long. Why should he care to do it for himself ? It is this lack of interest, in addition to the difficulty of manipulation, which makes the task hard. If only it could be made interesting, what a different matter it would be ! Can he be made interested in the doing of it, at any rate until the first hard process of learning has been attended to and mastered ? Is there any method by which fresh interests can be created ? This is the question which we need to answer.

One day I take a visitor into the nursery to see the children. One and all are happily occupied, and, when we first come in, hardly notice us. Malcolm is absorbed in his building. Their special occupations are in the "focus" of their consciousness, and our presence arouses no interest. But we stand there, quietly watching, and gradually we become an element in the margin of their minds.

Norman and Janet, though interested in their game, are naturally curious, so that anything fresh straying into their field of consciousness tends quickly to become an object of special interest. Their game becomes less interesting, the visitor more so. Who is she ? they wonder. Is she fond of children ? Is she going to stay for a while in the nursery ? They question her

—Can she tell stories? They love to listen. Down she sits, with the children on either side, and begins her tale. But all this time, Malcolm has never once looked up from his building. He is interested in that alone. An imaginative, strong-willed, keen little lad, he puts his whole energy into whatever he may be doing, resenting any interference or even suggestions from without, asking for no help. He is so keenly interested in whatever he may be doing that all else for the time is uninteresting in comparison. Hoping to create a fresh interest in Malcolm, the visitor weaves his building into the plot of her story. "In just such a castle as Malcolm is building over there," she begins, in an audible voice—and the sound of his name enters into Malcolm's margin of consciousness. In his corner, he can half hear the story as it progresses, and the thoughts of what happened in the castle become gradually more interesting than even the building of the castle itself. He listens and ceases to build; then he too, interested at last, quietly slips into his place by the visitor's side. She has found a way to arouse a fresh interest in him. Because he was keen on his castle, he was ready to be keen over this story about his castle. *By working on the lines of his old interest, a new interest has been created.*

Norman had made up his mind to be a soldier when he grew up, he was never tired of hearing about soldiers and war, and to this concrete ideal in him we are able to appeal. Soldiers in camp do everything for themselves—let him fancy himself a soldier preparing for drill as he dresses in the morning. Or Father may be his ideal of manhood; and he struggles with his buttons because, if he cannot learn to dress himself, he can never go to business like Father.

Roy would sit for hours listening if Nurse or Mother would tell him his favourite stories; but they are busy and cannot often spare the time. The drudgery of learning to read ceases to be drudgery for him when he realizes that, if only he works persistently every day,

he makes constant progress, so that before long he will be able to read for himself.

Arthur naturally finds arithmetic dull and hard, but at school he is reading about the discovery of America by Columbus. His spirit of adventure is fired, and he feels as if he were on that boat with Columbus, looking out for new land. Food is becoming scarce, land is not yet in sight! Problems arise: Their supply of food is dwindling. They have now only 10 lb. of meat, twelve loaves of bread weighing 3 lb. each, etc.; the crew consists of six men, how long will the food last them if each man requires a minimum of 50 oz daily? Accurate calculation becomes a matter of absorbing interest; the lives of the crew depend upon it! Arithmetic dull! why, how could Arthur do without it?

In principle, our method of arousing interest is ever the same. *We can get the child to take an interest in things which are naturally uninteresting by making use of those interests which he already possesses.* We must watch the children, find out their natural interests, and use these to help them to acquire others. Unless they are interested, they do not do their best; what they are interested in, they strive with all their might to accomplish. We forget the need of initial stimulus in matters which were hard to us once, but which have long ago become automatic.

There are laws which govern attention. Jessie has been to the pantomime for the first time. Not once did she take her eyes off the stage, she hardly moved a muscle while the curtain was up, nothing escaped her attention, and the afternoon was one of intense enjoyment.

What a treat her aunt had given her! But even on the way home, she was inclined to be irritable, when the tram kept on stopping; at tea, she quarrelled with the other children; when bedtime came, she cried and did not want to go. "You are ungrateful,

Miss Jessie," Nurse breaks out exasperated; "I should think your aunt would never want to take you out again, behaving like this when you come home. You don't deserve to have treats." Nurse does not understand. It is just because Jessie has appreciated the afternoon so much that she is "naughty" when the treat is at an end. *Both interest and concentration of attention mean strain*, a strain necessarily followed by a reaction. We must bear with her; protect her from the clamour of the other little ones, get her quickly to bed, where she can enjoy her tea in the quiet that she needs. Just as we should be physically exhausted after taking a very long walk, so Jessie is mentally exhausted after her "treat," and the mental exhaustion reacts upon the body.

Each night Robert has a few home-lessons to do. They need not take him long, but he dawdles over them. Insisting that working in the same room with other people makes no difference to him, he starts his Latin exercise in the dining-room where all are sitting. He has just begun, "Balbus is building the wall," when his sister Margaret comes in to ask if she can accept an invitation out to tea on Saturday. Even though Balbus was occupied so busily in the "focus" of his mind, Margaret's words stray into the margin and then usurp the focus, Balbus is turned out, while Robert asks if he can have someone in to tea with him, since Margaret is going out. "Yes, but get on with your work, lad," says Mother; and he bends once more to his task. But his power of voluntary attention is not yet strong, he is easily distracted. One thing after another interrupts him. At last his lessons are done, but in all probability they are badly done, and he has taken a long while over them—all because of this difficulty of concentration on less interesting things in the midst of things which are more interesting.

*When anything has to be done which calls for a sustained effort of attention, we must lessen the temptations which would cause the child's mind to wander. Enforced*



silence or solitude; allowing a certain time for a definite piece of work; insisting that work half-done must be done again—make it not only worth while, but easier, to attend.

Ellis and Mary have texts to learn every week-end; they think of them on Sunday afternoons and set to work, but they find them so difficult to commit to memory; it is not like learning poetry, where the rhyme and rhythm help. Their brains are not quite fresh; it is hard to concentrate their attention in the afternoon, when their energies have been more or less dissipated throughout the day; and before the texts are known, they feel disgusted with themselves and out of love with the beautiful words. Another plan is tried. Texts are to be learnt in bed before getting up in the morning, and said before breakfast. Brains are then fresh, distractions are then *nil*, it is therefore easier to attend and the difficulty is at an end.

*Concentration is an effort and the habit of concentration is only gradually formed. While the habit is growing, times and places must be set apart for work and obstacles to concentration removed.* The habits of tidying away all toys and occupations, and reading for a quiet half-hour before bedtime; of reading in silence for a short time daily after dinner; of working always in solitude or in silence; of studying as far as possible only when the brain is fresh—all help to form, in childhood, habits which will be invaluable in later life. Concentration of attention is by no means an easy matter; it requires deliberate cultivation.

Concentration of attention in one direction implies inattention in other directions; and the capacity for deliberate inattention to certain things is equally important with the capacity for attention, and equally capable of cultivation.

A cricket match has been planned for Saturday, and the day turns out wet. Complaining will not make the sun shine, neither will it reconcile the children to

their loss. The only thing for them to do is to make up their minds that the match is "off," plan something else in its stead, and thereby cease to "attend" to the disappointment.

A visit to the dentist has been arranged; does it make it any easier to face the ordeal by thinking about it for hours beforehand? Something else must be put in the focus of consciousness, and there will be room, in the merest margin only, for thoughts of dentistry.

Molly falls and bruises her head, with the result that she has a headache. Is the ache more easily borne by talking about it? If it is bad, surely bed is the best place for her; if it is bearable, then it is best to try to forget it; constantly referring to the matter only makes her more conscious of it.

If a fault has been committed and the child is full of remorse, is any good done, even in this case, by prolonged dwelling upon the wrong-doing? It is enough that he is sorry, that he has braced himself up with the determination next time to do differently. To hug his misery is weakening for himself and miserable for other people. Except inasmuch as attention to his fault prevents its recurrence, such attention is morbid.

*The habit of dwelling upon the blessings and not the troubles of life, of seeing the silver lining and not the dark cloud of disappointment, of rejoicing in the strength rather than complaining of the weakness of our comrades—can be deliberately developed in childhood.* If we begin early enough and try hard enough, we have more power of control over our thoughts than we realize; with constant practice, we can become masters in the art of attending, allowing in the focus of our minds only what makes for growth and for true happiness, deliberately thrusting into the farthest margin all that hinders.

Eager to help, Frank, aged four, starts clearing away the breakfast things. "Be careful, Frank,"

his mother urges repeatedly. "No, not the milk jug: you might spill the milk." "Only carry one thing at a time, dear, take this cup into the kitchen." "And now this plate." "No, you cannot carry more than one thing at a time yet, you are not big enough." "Bring a little tray, if you like, then you can take these spoons and forks: they won't get broken." Frank is the youngest in the family. His big sister is allowed to carry almost as many things at a time as the housemaid! but he is "too little" to do this or to do that—so somebody is always telling him. He is a sensitive little lad, not as robust as the others, not as good-looking as the others, nor as quick as they are. When they have *new* clothes, he only has "make-em-downs." Every day, in every way, memories of little humiliations crowd in Frank's mind round his thoughts of himself. Yet the old garments could be furbished up till they *looked* like new: it could be made a source of pride to come into his heritage of an older child's clothes because it meant that he was growing so big: we could make a point of accepting his help gladly in whatever direction he offered to give it because, understanding the difficulty, we thought more of his pride than of the chance breaking of crockery. Then, as far as we were concerned, Frank's "inferiority complex" would have little chance to grow.

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## CHAPTER IV

### THE GROWTH OF IMAGINATION

First stage of imagination, the power to "image"—Increased accuracy of knowledge due to comparison between what is seen and what is remembered

Second stage, the power to combine mental pictures according to outside direction—Enjoyment of pictures and games

Third stage, such mental pictures combined from within—Invention of games and stories—"Romancing," confusion between real and imaginary experiences.

Effect of emotion on imagination—Play-acting—Connexion between imagination and want of straightforwardness—Children's fears—Imagination enriches the commonplace—Children's toys—Practical difficulties to be faced in dealing with highly imaginative children :—

(1) That "play-acting" and dreaming often take the place of doing

(2) That they often get into the habit of beginning, and not finishing

Our attitude towards the children in such matters.

WE have already seen in the last chapter the way in which the child, by observation and comparison, gradually gained an increasing knowledge of the material world around him, a knowledge proven to us and growing more quickly in him, through the use of words. Such knowledge was not scientific, the child had no power of critical analysis, he merely compared all unconsciously the impressions which he received. To begin with, all men were classed under the one term "Daddy"—all four-legged creatures were "bow-wows," long-necked animals "gee-gees," triangular-shaped objects "ships."<sup>1</sup> Certain special features in the father, the dog, the horse or the ship struck

<sup>1</sup> For an interesting record of the growth of knowledge in this way see Sully, "Studies of Childhood: Extracts from a Father's Diary"

the small child's attention, and for him, outweighing in importance all other features, were seen for a time alone, the determining characteristic of the whole group.

But each day, his power of discrimination was growing. His father, he discovered, had a special connexion with himself which these other once-called "Daddies" did not have. Father lived with him, romped with him, had a voice, an appearance, which was always the same, he alone was "Daddy," the rest became "men." But not yet was his naming accurate. If "Daddy" was young and clean-shaven, the more general term "man" served to describe all other young and clean-shaven men, but a long beard made a marked difference; he could not permit the owner of a beard to belong to this same group. One old bearded man only he knew well—his grandfather—all the grey beards were classed with him, they were "grandfathers." This successive modification of groups with the growth of knowledge, implied a process of comparison between what was seen at the moment and what was remembered as having been seen previously. This fragment of memory was the basis of his judgment. Ronald, eighteen months old, is wheeled past the end of the road where, a few days before, he had seen a steam-roller at work. Gleefully he cries: "Nurse, Nurse, 'teemer down dat road!" A picture of the steam-roller was in his mind. At the same age he sees the dog panting after a run; "Dat bow-wow like puff-puff," he cries, implying a mental picture of a train. "Dat ship go Margery-Daw," is his remark, as he watches, for the first time, a real ship sailing with a rocking movement, showing a distinct memory of the nursery game "See-saw, Margery-Daw."

Such grouping of experiences, such comparisons, would be impossible, unless, as the result of his experience, the child possessed already clear and definite recollections of what he had seen. He is now able to

picture, with his mind's eye, certain definite objects with which he is familiar, though he cannot as yet follow a story which connects them together. When we show him a picture-book or sing nursery rhymes, the tale means nothing to him, but he rejoices in the forming of the images for their own sake.

We turn over the pages of the book—there are the children at the railway station on their way to the seaside, porters crowding around with the luggage, fathers and mothers buying tickets, everyone eager. There they are in the train, waving a last good-bye from the window. Now they are by the sea, busy with buckets and spades, some are riding on donkeys, some paddling. Baby is not interested in, is not yet capable of following, the sequence of the tale; he cares only for the individual objects. “Man,” “bow-bow,” “box,” “puff-puff,” “gee-gee,” eagerly the mite cries, pointing to the objects in the successive pictures which strike his eye. A train picture-book was given to Eric, when he was two years old. He opened it at the first page, saw an engine, and, with a glad cry of recognition, puff-puffed hard around the nursery! He turned to the next page, another engine! again he joyously carried the thought into action. The child is capable of forming mental pictures so clearly and definitely that he enjoys them as if they were real. Imagination has begun to influence his mental growth, but only to this extent. Thought is disconnected, thought is concrete. He can neither combine, nor follow a combination of, mental pictures. Abstract and general terms are as yet meaningless to him.

But the power of combining these mental pictures soon follows. When N. was nearly two-and-a-half, he was playing with his sister, and she, recalling a recent visit to the seaside, went to the other end of the room, telling him that she was going far away on the beach. He whispered something and crept under the table. “N go away from T., away on the beach,” she heard

him say, over and over again, his little voice gradually growing tremulous, until he burst into tears. With his mind's eye, he may have seen, not merely the definite mental picture of the beach, the sea, or N or T, with spades—but the connected whole—T. leaving N., then daring N. going even farther away from T, until, overwhelmed with grief at the thought of the loneliness he had brought upon himself, he wept! Norman, a little older, used to play at "soldiers on the battle-field" with Frank and Janet—but at the first wound which Frank received from the enemy, he was reduced to tears. He could not even pretend to stay at home with the soldiers' mother, while the others went to war; his power of imagination and his sympathies were too keen, he was able to follow too vividly the course of events.

By the time, then, that the child is two and a half to three years old, he is likely to have entered on the second stage in the development of his imagination. He has the power, not merely to form distinct images or mental pictures of objects, but to combine them into a connected whole, a definite piece of experience. A story can be followed, remembered instructions can be understood and carried out, a game can be played, the child can respond to suggestions of "make believe." He does not yet originate to any extent, but he can enter into and follow the free creative thought of other people; and all is intensely real.

This power of connecting thoughts, or of understanding the connexion of things and events leads him to enquire into the cause and origins of what he sees around him. "What for?" "Why?" "Who made?"—are constantly upon his lips; but the only "causes" which he can understand must be concrete and visible, all his knowledge is still in the form of clear and definite images, what is abstract and general is still beyond his comprehension.

Our abstract conceptions of space, of light and darkness, etc., are many of them at this time unreal

to the child, who can as yet only conceive of what he can see or touch and handle. Our very use of language may suggest or intensify his fears. We talk, for instance, of "the dark" or "the darkness," urging that brave children are not afraid of "the dark." What is "the dark"? the child questions, though he dare not put his thought into words, and as nobody ever tells him, he sometimes thinks of "the dark" as a kind of bogey or spirit that might hurt him. So full himself of life and feeling, absence of life or feeling is unthinkable to him. An imaginative child projects his own feelings, his own experiences into much which he sees in the world around him. Where no life is visible, life may nevertheless be; and the material world may be peopled with gnomes and sprites and fairies, and sometimes too with dark and dimly conceived and horrible forms.

This second stage in the development of imagination is quickly merged in the third stage, in which these mental pictures are combined freely and not only according to outside direction. Many children now begin to live in a land of their own imaginings, sometimes confused by them with the world of concrete experiences. Their memory-images are so strong and clear at this time that they actually confuse the real with the imaginary, belief and play-belief are imperfectly differentiated. To us unimaginative up-grown people they seem at times to be untruthful, when in their so-called "romances" they are only describing what is true to their imaginary experience.

Lucy, five years old, used to tell of wonderful journeys by train in the early mornings. She could describe all the details of the people she met, or of the things she saw from the carriage window. Later, when her travels ceased, in her imaginings a little baby came to her home—for which she was often responsible. She loved to tell of this baby's doings to sympathetic listeners, he was her first consideration, and seemed as real to her as any first-born to his



mother. Going to town one day with her school-mates, she suddenly realized that she could not travel in the tram with the others, because of the baby she was wheeling; but someone, luckily, was ready with a suggestion. She happily fastened the perambulator to the back of the tram-car where the conductor could keep an eye upon the baby! Mr. Canton's little girl in his book "*The Invisible Playmate*" lived the most real part of her life caring for a tiny baby. Another only child, about the same age, had an unfailing friend in "*Suchard*," happily named after the chocolates he so much enjoyed! Imagination steps in and cares for the lonely children.

But not to all children is this vivid power of imagining granted—sometimes the world is only peopled with "fancy" forms under the stress of emotional excitement. A game started in play may end in reality, sprites and fairies invisible in the town may become visible under the stimulus of beautiful country.

Cuthbert, aged five, had planned a game of "hunters." He and his sister Meg, with imaginary bows and arrows, were shooting in the darkened passage, and gathering their prey, which consisted of ancient garments out of the children's "dressing-up" box. Suddenly the boy ran to his mother, his face pale—"Mother," he cried, "there *is* something flying about the passage really; there wasn't at first, but there is now!" Under the stimulus of excitement, strange birds of prey had been created by his imagination, though in many ways he was a matter-of-fact little person and despised fairies as "unreal" and "babyish." A year later, he was staying with friends, and a day was spent in the woods at Hawarden. On his return home, his mother went to meet him. "I have seen the fairies," were his first eager words, "I *do* believe in them now; I saw them at the foot of a mossy tree in the woods," and he proceeded to tell her all about it. "Visions seen on the mount" are treasured on the plain; the intense reality of a

child's imaginings at such times lasts on, making such fancies real even after the emotional stimulus has died away. Fairies were now part of Cuthbert's more commonplace life—they danced in the sunbeam's rays and on happy, smiling faces, lived in the books he loved, and even crept from the loaf on the table and sat on the edge of his mug of milk!

At this age, children, even when they do not live in a fancy-created world, are full of such vivid imaginings, and possess such resource in combining them, that they weave "stories" and play "plays" all the time. Aurore (George Sand), shut within four chairs to keep her from playing with the fire, used to pull out the straws with her hands, as she composed long and wonderful tales; her make-believe was intensely real to her.

"One evening at dusk, she and her cousin were playing at chasing one another from tree to tree, for which the bed curtains did duty. The room had disappeared for these little day-dreamers, they were in a lonely country at the oncoming of night, and when they were called to dinner, they heard nothing. Aurore's mother had finally to carry her to the table and she could ever recall the astonishment she felt on seeing the light, the table, and other real objects around her!"<sup>1</sup>

Caroline, eight years old, "spent her golden times" under an old beech-tree at the foot of the garden, where, in dainty shells, she made sand pies for the fairies. This tree was one of her most real companions. At any time she could talk to "him," and explain anything about the schoolroom which had been particularly tiresome, and "he just rustled and sighed," and the child was again in Fairyland, the schoolroom quite forgotten.

In quiet fancies enjoyed all alone, and in games shared with one another, life is the richer for the children's power of imagination. In games, there is

<sup>1</sup> "Studies of Childhood," p. 494.

no limit to their originality. Conscious of no irreverence, Arthur, aged five, "played" at being God. Mounted on the nursery table, as on Mount Olympus, with all the toys piled beside him, he dispensed his benefits with a bounteous hand. "Joyce, God loves you, He sends you a present of this book."—"Caroline, God sees that you try hard to be good, He is giving you this doll."—Gratefully and reverently his juniors received the gifts, and not till all had been given, did "God" descend to earth to plan some fresh play of his imagination!

This faculty of ready combination of "images," or "mental pictures," may not only be used in the play of fancy, but in connexion with actual events. The child is then able to foresee rapidly the consequences of his actions, and this often tempts an imaginative child into the doing of actions which are not altogether straightforward, or into the telling of deliberate untruths. These need to be carefully distinguished from the "romances" of the child, who confuses what he actually sees with what he so vividly imagines.

For instance, when Leonard wanted for himself a toy with which Eva was playing, he used to plan a game of "shop." After two or three sham moves in the form of bargaining, he would end by "buying" from Eva the toy which he specially desired to possess, then diplomatically bringing that game to a close, he himself was able to play with the coveted toy!

Dick was only three years old. As a great treat, he was allowed some red currants for tea, these he wanted to eat alone instead of with his bread and butter. One "finger" after another of his bread was eaten under compulsion, till only one small crust remained—a crust which he was obliged to finish before he had more currants. Mother was looking the other way! Dick slipped off his chair with the crust, ran to the window, which opened out on the garden, and threw it out. "Muvver," tenderly murmured the little sinner as he climbed back into his chair, "poor 'iccle

dickies have no bread and butter, kind Dick give 'iccle dickies a bit of his bread, Dick so solly for poor 'iccle birds—Bread and butter all gone, Muvver!" he added in a bright voice, "now give Dick some more 'iccle gwapes!"

Joan's quick intellectual imagination enabled her on every occasion to find excuses for wrong-doing. She was four and a half years old, and on coming in from her morning walk, had thoughtlessly taken off her dainty bonnet and thrown it on the floor. Nurse had definitely told her that she was not to take her bonnet off herself; but Nurse was not in the room at the time, only her mother, who was busy working. The bonnet was no sooner off than Joan heard Nurse's step as she passed the door. Swiftly her imagination planned the best course to pursue. She ran to her mother, asking for the bonnet to be put on again. "No, dearie, you don't need to wear it indoors," was the natural rejoinder, and like an arrow from a bow, Joan was out of the room to tell Nurse the news, implying that Mother had herself taken it off, since bonnets were not worn in the house! "When I was younger," said Donald, a ten-year-old philosopher, in a retrospective mood, "I think I told the truth without thinking about it, but when I got a bit older and knew what wrong was and how people felt about it, then when I had done anything I ought not to have done, I could see at once in my mind all that would happen, and I was tempted to lie." With a sensitive child, imagination for a time makes honesty harder.

But this vivid power of imagination is not always a source of joy; it is often accompanied in early childhood by excessive timidity. In such a case, the element of emotion (fear) so intensifies an idea that it becomes a temporary delusion. Norman, aged five, was playing in the garden and had scratched his finger with a piece of sword-grass. Screaming with terror, he declared that he could see the blood pouring down, though not a mark of injury was visible to any eye but his!

Nora, aged six, had swallowed a plum stone and feared a speedy death. Drinks, food, arguments were of no avail, hours afterwards she could still feel the stone where it had, she declared, stuck in her throat. She was given a small peppermint to swallow, on the understanding that there was no room in the narrow passage for both peppermint and stone, the peppermint swallowed would push the stone down before it, and all would be well! In good faith, Nora swallowed the sweet, in imagination, she watched its passage down the "red lane," saw it push the stone onwards, all sensation of a plum stone in her throat disappeared, and the prospect of a long life was hers once more!

Austen, aged seven, declared that he felt nervous when his bedroom door was closed at night. He didn't know why, "things might come" "What things?" his mother asked. "Well, a bear," was his reply. "Bears don't come here in England," she said, "besides if a bear came, you could soon manage him with your new lacrosse," which he was very proud of and regarded as a formidable weapon! "I know the bears won't really come," the laddie urged, "it's the suffragettes I am afraid of. They might throw a bomb, and my lacrosse would be of no help to me then!"

When Edward was a little chap, there was a saw-mill close by his home. He loved to go there and watch the machinery at work. The men, to keep him away, told him that a big bogey, Jerry by name, would get him if he came near. But such was his curiosity that even Jerry could not deter him. One day he crept right inside to watch. Suddenly the trap-door above him opened, and he saw a head with horns and a kind of sheepskin covering. In his terror he tried to run, but could not move, the creature dragged him back. He fell and, leaving the sheepskin covering on top of him, Jerry escaped through the door. Such an experience would have frightened any child at the time, but, as Edward was an imaginative child, it was years before the boy recovered from the shock.

Probably the trick was played as a joke ; but what we say in the hearing of imaginative children, what we do to punish them for wrong-doing, what they read in their books, has an effect deeper and more lasting than we dream of. Physical health, freedom from excitement and from fear, long hours of rest, good and wholesome stories and beautiful pictures, matter more to the child of vivid imagining than to one less impressionable.

The imaginative child has difficulties to face from which his less imaginative brother and sister are saved ; but he has untold advantages over them. For him the commonplace does not exist, life is full of joy and wonder and beauty ; books and friends mean more to him, he is never at a loss for something to do, whether merely playing a game, or working and planning in imagination ; he looks ahead, and the ideals, which he fancies he can one day realize, lift his life all the time to a higher level.

Children nowadays are spoilt, and their imagination allowed to weaken from disuse, through the superabundance of elaborate toys with which grown-up people provide them. "I've got nothing to play with," murmured little Margaret, for whom one fresh toy after another had been bought : "I want a doll's house with a real staircase and electric light and electric bells !"

What shop doll with its flaxen curls can really be compared with a wooden doll, which by the imaginative child can be treated either as a boy or a girl, as baby, or grown princess ? What can take the place of a table, which serves equally for a pirate ship, for merchant vessel, for coach or for dwelling-house ?

"The sweetest craft that slips her moorings on the Round Pond is what is called a stick-boat," writes Barrie, "because she is rather like a stick, until she is in the water and you are holding the string. Then as you walk round pulling her, you see little men running about her deck, sails rise magically and catch the breeze, you put in on dirty nights at snug harbours

which are unknown to lordly yachts. Night passes in a twink and again your rakish craft noses for the wind, whales spout, you glide over buried cities, and have brushes with pirates, and cast anchor on coral isles. . . . You always want to have a yacht . . . in the end your uncle gives you one . . . but soon you like to leave it at home. . . . Those yachts have nothing in their holds. It is the stick-boat that is freighted with memories *The yachts are (merely) toys.*"

Our modern toys leave no room for imagination, and the child who, in his instinct to create and modify, destroys them in the process, is to be understood and sympathized with rather than blamed. Raw material for toys or games is what the children need, before their imagination is crushed out of them by a life too literal too exacting and too prosaic, or spoilt by a superabundance of possessions. The wooden dolls are the best, which will stand wear and tear, and are loved for their own sakes, and not their golden curls, better than an elaborate ready-made grocer's shop is a wooden box for the shop, some bricks for counter and chairs, and a few odd treasures from the kitchen for stock.

Robert, on a wet day, can plan a delightful game with nothing but a piece of tape and a marble. For Molly, a row of ninepins forms a class of obedient and teachable scholars. The toys the children want are those with which they can create—soldiers, who can conduct manœuvres and fight to the death among the hills "in the land of counterpane"—bricks, with which the children can build houses, forts, railway stations, and bridges—odd pieces of stuff, to furnish houses, to dress up in, to sell as merchants—furniture which will stand rough usage. If we give the children the material, their imagination will supply the rest; and they can live at will on the wild prairies of the West, in the heart of the busy city, on sea or on land, a life of adventure or one of domestic peace.

The imaginative child, if in good health, is rarely at

a loss to know what to do : in play early in life, later in purposeful action, he is full of resource Too full at times he seems to us conventional adults, and we are tempted to wish that, for a few moments, the child would enjoy reading a book quietly, or even looking out of the window and doing nothing ! But such children must ever be creative, except when they are asleep ; merely to absorb is too dull a task for them They worry themselves and worry us, trying to carry out ideas for the most part beyond their powers, but all the time they are learning.

It is holiday time. Harold and Donald start tooling in the playroom, bent on making a cradle out of a wooden box for Madge's birthday. They can see that cradle in their mind's eye ! How grand it will be ! They decide to save up one shilling between them to buy copper wire to make a spring mattress, perhaps mother will give the material to make the stuff mattress and the bedding ! Then, if they make a beautiful cradle, maybe Mother will buy a doll to go in it. They thrill with excitement. With saw and nails they work away, but, as they work, the fact, alas ! is gradually borne in upon them that it will take them a long time to save up that shilling. Such a consideration serves for the time to damp their ardour, and they leave the cradle and go into the garden, to complete an " aviary " begun the day before. Harold is only nine, and Donald seven, but it is the very fact of their youth which gives them such confidence in their own powers. They hammer the loose planks together ; a rod five feet high is needed for the side of the " aviary " door. Mother is called in to help to provide it. The nails are all used up ; again Mother is in request to provide more nails For a time, the great work progresses quietly. But fresh raw material—a pail with some whitewash—leads to fresh ideas. Why not whitewash the portion already built, and get some idea as to how the aviary will look when finished ? When the children are called in to tea, Donald has by mistake sat



in the whitewash, Harold is bespattered from head to foot! A typical day in the holidays of a family of imaginative children!

If free scope is to be allowed to the children's imagination, the sooner they learn to be careful and to tidy up, to consider the rights of others equally with the carrying out of their own ideas, the better for every one.

But is it well, even at this early age, to permit such free scope? Or is it better to limit the children's creative activities and encourage them to do only what it is within their power to do? Should they find out for themselves through failure the limits of their capability? Or should we insist, in play at home, as we do in work at school, that what they begin to do, they must have the power to bring to completion?

It happened that the aviary, which Harold and Donald strove to build, occupied them on and off throughout the whole of the holidays, that they were not merely kept busy in the building, but learnt much in the way of handicraft, even though, in the form of an aviary, it was never brought to completion. But what if, like the cradle, the aviary had been quickly abandoned, and something else begun, equally beyond their powers of workmanship, to be as promptly given up? If their self-imposed tasks frequently proved too hard for them, if the difficulties they were required to face were unconquerable, might they not get into the way of *shirking* their difficulties, instead of pegging away at them until they were overcome? This is a question we need to ask ourselves when we allow the children to give full rein to their imaginations.

But it is not only in connexion with their handicraft, but in connexion also with the exercise of their imagination in "play-acting" and in day-dreaming that difficulties arise. Is it good that the children, in their acting, should become in turn princes and peasants, lords and slaves? Are they, through the weaving of tales, through acting and

"make-believe," really brought into touch with a wider sphere of life? Are their sympathies enlarged as they personate in turn the coal-heaver or the engine-driver, the soldier or the hospital nurse? Or is it after all "merely play," and if their "real" lives are out of harmony with their "play" life, is this desirable? The boy personates the gallant knight in his rescue of the distressed damsel and, as he acts, he experiences a glow of chivalrous feeling. As he, like Horatius of old, defends the bridge, dauntless courage for the time fires his breast. But, the next moment, he may be treating his sister in a manner anything but chivalrous, or, suffering some slight hurt, he may, unlike brave Horatius, go whimpering to bed! Will not such a divorce between his imaginary and his real life make for moral weakness rather than strength? Is it well that the imaginative child who finds it hard to adjust himself to real life should provide for himself a way of escape by means of day-dreaming?

Of such dangers as these we need to be fully aware. There *is* a danger lest the child who gets into the habit of compensating for the difficulties of his life by means of day-dreams, should develop more and more away from reality, making the task of adjustment still harder for him in the future. There *is* a danger and it is well that we should recognize the fact, that the imaginative child, full of ideas too difficult for realization, may get into the habit of dreaming rather than doing, of promising rather than performing. There *is* a danger that the child, who is always "acting" great deeds, may rest content with thrills of emotion in his world of make-believe, which are not brought to the test in real life.

But as the child who once "romanced," gradually, without any direct interference on our part, learnt the difference between real and imaginary, the necessity for accurate observation and truth-telling in the "real" world, so the child, who strives beyond his powers, gradually learns by experience what he can

and what he cannot do. We must see to it that, in those details of his life which are our especial concern, in his physical habits, in the care of clothes and books, in his small household duties, and in his work at school, he learns to *finish and to finish well*. In such matters, we must insist on punctuality, neatness, adherence to spoken word, thoroughness in what is below and not only upon the surface, and he will acquire, through such a training, a standard of action which will imperceptibly affect the carrying out of his own ideas equally with the behests of others.

Then we shall not need, in these early years, to check him in his desire to begin that which we know it must be beyond his power to finish, lest, as he grows older, he should become careless in the completion of his work, for, all the time, he is learning, though indirectly, that to finish any task to the best of his ability is his bounden duty. It is surely better that he should so learn. His independence of thought, his longing to create, his self-confidence, are not suffering by constant checks in those early years when he cannot understand the limits of his own capacity; he is able to gain a high standard of work, but without loss of originality and initiative.

Our attitude towards him should surely be the same in the world of fancy. We shall not need to check his expression of feeling, but to see that the good impulses "made believe" to be his, in day-dreams and in play, should also be striven for in real life.

The child gets accustomed to this attitude of mind, and feels that he is somehow false to himself, if he does not at any rate try to live up to the ideal which, in games and in dreams, he so vividly realizes.

Dougald was only six. One morning, when he awoke, his face shone with a glad light. "I saw a fairy," he said, "inside one of the primroses on the mantelpiece yesterday, and she sent me a beautiful dream, and I am so happy! I dreamt that the king sent for me, and said the soldiers favoured me, and wanted me

to lead the army, and they would take care of me And so I went in a fairy carriage, and I led them to the battle, and I was a bit hurt, and the king, who was looking out of a window, saw me hurt, and he teared off to the hospital, and brought a thing to carry me in, and in the hospital the king himself read to me, and the soldiers made me cups of tea and things, and I soon got better, and the soldiers asked me to be their General always, and I was. And I got lots of medals just like Lord Roberts, and you were all so proud of me, and I am so happy with such a beautiful dream—and I want," he added, for he knew he was timid and not like a soldier by nature, "to do things now, while I'm little, to make the dream able to come true when I grow big."

It may seem a small thing to us, but it was not small to Dougald, that the practical outcome of his dream was a renewed effort to face strange dogs in the street and bear tumbles bravely, to earn a soldier's "bravery marks" on a chart fixed up on the nursery wall. If emotion is allowed to run to waste in the realm of imagination, not strength of feeling, but sentimentalism is the result. Emotion must needs be trained to bear fruit in definite acts of morality

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## CHAPTER V

### THE LAW OF HABIT

Tendencies quickly become habits—The Law of Habit—Importance of formation of right habits in childhood—Our active interference in the matter advisable—Why?—Two methods of forming habits (1) by reward and punishment, (2) by cultivating the child's natural impulses which tend in the right direction—The former only an occasional and temporary measure—The child's future character is dependent on his habits—Psychology of habits—Danger of allowing exceptions—Gain in beginning early—Difference between good behaviour and good conduct

FROM our earliest years, habit constitutes a large part of our behaviour. By the time a child is five or six, probably three-fourths of all his actions are the result of habits already gained. We rouse him in the morning and, according to his wont, he either cuddles down closer under the bed-clothes, gets up briskly and happily, or crawls out and begins to dress with a "camel-ious hump" and a "yarly-snarly voice." Once out, he is either quickly dressed and ready for breakfast, or, talking instead of doing, dawdling over his duties, he arrives down late as usual. His manners at breakfast, his promptness in getting ready for his lessons or his walk, his behaviour to his parents or his nurse, his manner of greeting strangers in the street, his obedience or disobedience to those in authority over him, his way of handling books and toys—all this, and more, is the result of the habits he has formed up to that time. He is not intentionally ill-mannered or well-mannered, slack or prompt, careless or careful; for the most part, he acts wrongly or rightly unconsciously, because he has been accustomed to act wrongly, or encouraged to act rightly. If his actions

are spontaneous, they are the expression of natural impulses in his character, which he inherited as a birthright. These, too, have become largely modified by this Law of Habit.

If, for instance, he was, as a baby, naturally passionate, such passion, if unchecked and constantly indulged, has now grown habitual; if he was naturally unselfish, opportunities for the exercise of this good quality have so frequently offered themselves, that the impulse to do for, or give to, others, has by now become increasingly easy to him, until it too has become habitual. Every natural impulse which the child possessed has been strengthened by use, until, in these few years, what were originally only tendencies have become habits difficult to supplant. The same thing holds true of his deliberate acts of will. These seem to be the result of the balancing of his original impulses and desires, but they are so only to a partial extent. His experience of life, his customary lines of thought, his habitual behaviour, these, even more than his early tendencies, now influence him in coming to a decision. In his manner of willing, in his manner either of yielding to or conquering his original impulses, in his normal behaviour, in work-time and in play-time, in the final decisions which he is called upon to make in the little difficulties which confront him, as well as in those manners and customs which have rapidly become second nature, and which we are accustomed to speak of more specifically as his "habits," in all this the child has become in these few years a resultant of his past self. His behaviour at five or six is the outcome of the habits in which he has either grown up unconsciously, or in which he has been trained deliberately, from his early infancy.

A little lad, 6 years old, had just begun to go to school. He had enjoyed the experience. Everything had been a delight to him, the games, the lessons, the companionship of the other children, even the excitement of going and coming. But after he had gone

regularly for about a week, he announced at breakfast that, on that particular morning, he was not going as usual. He did not feel ill, he liked the school—he simply did not *wish* to go; to-morrow, maybe, he would go again. His mother was sorely puzzled; persuasion and commands only increased the boy's agitation—what was the cause of this curious dislike of going? At last the little lad broke into tears—"I *do* like going to school, I *know* I do," he said, "but I don't want to make *a habit of anything!*" However unusual this feeling, most of us would sympathize with it.

From the Law of Habit, however, there is no escape for young or old. Every impression which we receive, every action which we do, leaves its mark upon our brains. Hence, as we have seen, knowledge grows, hence, habits are formed. Our nervous systems develop in accordance with the way in which they have been exercised, to use Dr. Carpenter's words, just as a sheet of paper or a coat, folded again and again in the same way, tends to fall afterwards into the same folds. A certain action once performed, even though hard at first, is more easily performed the second time, and the more frequently it is repeated, the more easily it is done, until finally it becomes almost second nature; an impulse once realized in action grows stronger, it is therefore more likely to produce action a second time, and increasing strength is in this way gradually added unto it. Habits of one kind or another are formed inevitably.

If, then, from this Law of Habit there is no escape, as long as we have bodies; if, by the time we are six years old, three-fourths of our actions are the result of habits formed; if, by the time we are grown-up, ninety-nine hundredths of our actions (according to Prof. James) are so determined; if, in this way, our very life and destiny is dependent on the habits which we form as we grow; then it follows that we cannot exaggerate the importance of the formation of right

habits in childhood, neither can we exaggerate our own responsibility, as parents, in their formation.

The children in the nursery cannot realize, and we do not wish them to realize, how much the habits which they are then forming will count later on in their lives. We need to realize this for them, and it is our business to see that, from the beginning, a solid foundation of good habits is laid on which they themselves can build later on.

When we expect children to give their whole attention to the little duties of dressing and undressing, of folding up their clothes, etc., we are training them in concentration, a power which can be made a mental habit, and which will be of incalculable value to them in later life. We are training them for a wiser expenditure in the future, when we insist that thought should be put into the expenditure of the weekly penny. "Make me king of all that goes under this hat," Carlyle used to say. We are enabling the children to master their impulses in later life when we expect them, as children, to face small disappointments bravely instead of grumbling; when we expect them to learn to control their tempers. Small duties, conscientiously done, make them capable of accomplishing larger duties. If we take care of the *habits* in the broad sense, the *capacity* will look after itself.

There are two main reasons why our active interference in the matter is often advisable. In the first place, if the child is allowed to go more or less his own way, and form bad habits if he chooses, he *may* learn by experience later that his way was wrong; but he *may not*. The mere fact of possessing such bad habits may blind him to his own faults; and even if he does discover and try to remedy his weakness, the task is a hard one, while he has, through his early bad habits, meanwhile lost many valuable opportunities. In the second place, if, in a conflict between the good and bad impulses in the child, we abstain from all interference, the good impulse *may* win in the battle;



but again it *may not*. And if it fails, the result is not merely that, for *once*, the wrong has triumphed, but the wrong impulse is strengthened by coming out victorious; and because it is stronger, it is more likely still to win again when next a conflict occurs. The child's nature is a complex of good and evil, we cannot wisely leave him to develop his own character; we must see to it as far as possible that the right always wins, that good habits—and not bad ones—are formed.

In the formation of habits, two methods are possible; both are used by most parents and nurses in their dealings with the children. In the one case, we make use of the child's capacity for pleasure and pain; by punishing the bad actions and rewarding the good, we gradually make right-doing habitual. In the other case, we make use of the child's natural impulses in the right direction; by associating these with the right actions, we gradually form desirable habits. Our judgment tells us that, whenever possible, the latter is the better course to pursue, though, in particular instances, we may occasionally have to fall back on the former method. Concrete examples will make the distinction between these two methods clearer. Suppose that we are beginning to train a small boy, about two years old, in the "art of independence." To begin with, he must learn to put on his own clothes. This is a difficult task for many children, until strength and skill in the baby fingers have been gradually acquired by practice. Unless the little man is by nature intensely eager to do things "by self," he naturally prefers that Nurse should put on his boots or his coat, and leave him free to use his time and energy on other matters, which are far more interesting to him. The sight of the boots, therefore, does not arouse in him any corresponding desire to put them on for himself; he might even naturally rebel against the imposed task. Now his nurse can go to work in either one of two ways. She can punish him for disobedience, if he refuses to put them on,

and reward him for obedience, if he does what she tells him. In either case, she is using his capacity for pleasure and pain. Or she can find some natural impulse in him, which she can make use of as a motive-force to action. Suppose that the little lad longs to be a soldier, or to be a man like his father. Nurse can then make him realize that manhood is out of the question while she has to put on his boots! What soldier before he went to battle, what father before he went to business, ever had a nurse to put on his boots for him? In this way, she associates with the sight of the boots, the thought that it is *manly* to put them on alone; the desire to become manly is strong in the boy, strong enough to overcome difficulties and lead to action. He therefore makes the necessary effort; once made, owing to the Law of Habit, it is easier to make the effort a second time; and gradually the demand upon his attention becomes less and less, until the boots are put on automatically, and the habit has been formed.

To take a second example. Suppose the habit which we wish the child to gain is that of tidiness. We can either tell him that unless his clothes are folded up, his toys put away, etc., he will suffer by the loss of some treat; or we can promise him a reward, such as a story at bedtime or a piece of cake for tea, if he does these particular things throughout the day—and in either case, he would probably bear in mind what he had been told. But another and better method of teaching him to be tidy is open to us. We can make use of his natural desire to be helpful. A small child will put his bricks in the box, his train in the corner, his coat in the cupboard, he will fetch and carry for us in the nursery, under the impression that he is *helping* us, and is therefore an important little person. Tidiness as a duty makes no special appeal to him; but he loves to lend a helping hand. By working upon this desire, we get a good start in the direction of the habit we wish to instil—just as by

working on the child's desire to be manly, we persuaded him to use every effort to put on his own boots. We did not have to *command* these actions to be done, because we are able to establish their connexion with the child's natural desires. Repeated opportunities for the exercise of such desires gradually produce the habit.

*Such a method of going to work is the best possible. The child regards himself at the start as our ally and not our enemy—he himself desires the habit; it is deep-rooted in the natural impulses of his character; and provided we insist tactfully on the repetition of such good actions, without exception, the habit is formed easily enough. But—and this is an important point—such impulses are not always at hand when we want them. They are transitory and intermittent, and often, alas! capable of being appealed to most strongly when they are of the least practical use. This is the case both with the desire for manliness and the desire to help. In the busy life of a nursery full of children, we often find their independence trying, and reject their kindly aid, because we can manage more quickly without them. Their impulse to be manly and helpful has not been cultivated when they were young, and later, when we should be glad of their independence and their assistance, the strong impulse has passed away and is only with difficulty recalled. It is impossible for us to overestimate the importance of watching for, and making use of, the child's good impulses when he feels them. This demands considerable patience and self-control on our part, but the effort must undoubtedly be made. Not only is it true that virtue is never "so deeply rooted as when it has its beginnings implanted by nature in those (tendencies) which are ours from the very birth," but, by encouraging the child's good impulses, we are making good habits a pleasure to him to acquire, and we are doing more than forming mere habits, we are helping to develop the child's character.*

Whenever possible, we must then graft the habit on to some tendency in the right direction which the child already possesses. But these good impulses are not always there to be called out ; moreover some habits are not of any special interest to the child. We may then on occasions have to fall back on the child's love of pleasure, or dislike of pain, as the motive force to action, but *only as a temporary measure.*

Suppose, for instance, we are teaching a baby to eat his food nicely, instead of allowing him to over-fill his spoon and try to cram all the contents into his mouth at once. There is no special impulse in the right direction to which we can appeal, the baby is too young ; his natural desire, if he has a healthy appetite, is to eat greedily. What course is it then best to pursue ? To begin with, it is better not to take undue notice of the baby's bad manners. A fuss is very likely just what he enjoys. By our noticing unduly what he does, we deepen the impression which his own actions are making upon his higher centres of memory and will, and by deepening the impression, we render the action more likely to recur. To avoid this difficulty, we try to turn the baby's thoughts away from his unmannerly actions. When these are out of the focus of his mind, we are able to introduce into the focus the right actions which we desire him to remember. For instance, he puts too much porridge into his spoon at once. Half emptying the spoon, we say brightly, " Where is that pussy ? He'll have to have his dinner, when Baby has done." Baby peeps for pussy, and forgets to be angry at our interference with his meal ! The half-spoonful is put unconsciously into his mouth. Then we half fill his spoon again, and so gradually win him into the habit of taking less. In this way we may succeed without a struggle—but we may not ! There are babies who refuse to have their attention so distracted, who brook no interference, however delight-

fully disguised. When we show them the right way of eating, as tactfully as possible, they reject our advances, and insist upon doing what they wish with their own meal! "It's *my* way and I like my own way best"—they would say, could they formulate their thoughts. There is, then, no help for it; the inevitable struggle must be faced; we remove the baby from the table; taken from his dinner, the rebellious babe weeps in his distress; he promises better things, and we give him another chance of eating his food nicely. If he has sufficiently suffered, he, for the time, gives up his own way for ours. With most children this piece of experience has to be repeated many times, without exception, before the habit of polite eating is finally formed.

In this way, one habit after another may be formed. *As a result of repetition, paths are formed in consciousness along which thought tends to travel until good habits are established*, in much the same way as a foot-path is made across a field by people walking again and again in the same direction. It is evident that *a single exception, especially in the early stages, undoes much of the work.*

Now it is clear, from a consideration of these facts, that if the natural reaction (in the last case that of greedy eating) had become habitual through neglect, the process of supplanting it by the acquired reaction of polite eating would necessarily have taken longer, and have entailed greater difficulty. *The earlier, therefore, that we begin to train the baby in good habits the better*; if we wait until he is older and "capable of reason"—as we say—many bad habits are certain to have been formed in the meantime.

It is further evident that these brain paths, or tendencies to action, are formed as the result of repeated *actions* on the child's part, not as the result merely of repeated *instructions* on our part. We could *talk* to the child for ever, but talking would be useless unless the *action* followed and even, if necessary,

repeated opportunities had been provided for the doing of it.

When the second method is used as a temporary measure, the motive-force which we call into play to obtain the action is that of fear of punishment or hope of reward ; the child is not induced to do good because he desires to be good. Hence *such a method by itself is not sufficient to yield habits of virtue*. It may be useful on occasions, or for a time, since the love of right sometimes follows the mere doing of the right, because the right is insisted upon—but, as the *sole* method, it can be relied on only to produce good manners, and not to inspire good desires.

A boy, aged three and a half, was playing in the nursery with the other children. Amongst his toys was a cart, which he was not then using, and with which his younger sister wanted to play. The cart had been given to the boy on his birthday, it was "his," and he did not want to lend it. His mother tried to draw out the unselfish side of his nature, but to no avail. At last, she said gravely : " I cannot feel happy and ' smiling ' with you, Sonnie, until you are kind and unselfish." But he remained obdurate. For more than half an hour, he went on with his own game, keeping the cart unused beside him, although he showed that his joy in play had departed, because his mother was not pleased with him. A big struggle was going on. At last, his mother again asked him : " Sonnie, would you like Jeanie to play with your cart ? " Eagerly he answered, " Yes," running across to his mother with the words : " Now, smile."

Such a method, and it is one often used, might lead to the mere handing over of the toy for the sake of the child's personal peace or comfort ; he might not *desire* to share—he might yield, merely because he was miserable unless the people around were pleased with him. Repeatedly used, it might result in *apparent* unselfishness, but the child might still have preferred to keep his toys to himself, if only he was left alone

to do so ; he is only becoming well-behaved. *The difference between good manners and real goodness lies in this : manners may become mechanical, but a good deed can no longer be called a good action when it is devoid of feeling, or when it is done from motives of self-interest.* The child's actions may have become unselfish, apparent success may have been gained, but we need to be critical of ourselves in our apparent successes as well as in our evident failures

Now this does not mean that, in the formation of good habits, we are to be constantly examining the roots, as it were, of the child's actions ; this would be harmful in the extreme. It only means that we must bear in mind that goodness is more than a matter of outward conformity. Outward conformity, to a certain extent, must be obtained, partly for the sake of the general discipline of the nursery, partly because it is often good for the child to act rightly, even under compulsion. But the awakening of right feeling *after* the doing of the action is not by any means certain, and this latter method needs, therefore, to be supplemented by the definite strengthening of those right impulses, which are not naturally strong enough to produce right action, and which, when once strengthened, can be used as a basis for the good habit. Not only must selfishness then be discouraged by disapproval, but unselfishness must be encouraged, by the marked approval of little acts of spontaneous kindness, by giving the child plants or animals of his own to care for, and so forth. The actions, whose repetition matters most in the training of the child, are those in which, by some means or other, we call forth the child's latent capacities for goodness. Such actions, constantly repeated, form habits of virtue, not merely because they are repeated, but because, at each repetition, they call out the child's good impulses, and, by so doing, strengthen and confirm them.

Our task, then, is not merely to form good habits of a more or less mechanical kind, important though

this is ; we need further to strengthen those impulses which result in good actions, and to base good habits upon strong, stable and good desires. To make good behaviour habitual without unnecessary struggles and weariness on the child's part, we must base good behaviour on a deep-seated love of goodness, we must watch for and encourage the child's good impulses—whenever, and however feebly, they may show themselves. This demands much patience and insight on our part, much loving and careful study of the children's natures. Nevertheless, knowing how dependent are the child's future character and destiny on his habits, whether good or bad, we shall neither spare ourselves nor the child ; we shall encourage—at times insist upon—the small “strokes of daily effort” which must in time yield the good result.

Yet, all the while, we must bear in mind that it is not the formation of set habits, however good, at which we aim, but the development of a character, whose good impulses have been so strengthened by habitual use, that they are alert and free to express themselves continuously in an ever-increasing range of activities. Habits should be our servants, not our masters.

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## CHAPTER VI

### THE GROWTH OF HABITS

The bearing of the psychology of habit on discipline—Canons laid down—"Difficult" children—Heredity and the Law of Habit—Application of the main principles involved in the psychology of habit—"Golden Rules" in the formation of habits—Need for resource—Good behaviour at meals—Practical suggestions—Habits of virtue—Moral actions must be the outcome of desire and not merely the result of habits imposed from without—illustrations

CERTAIN conclusions in connexion with general discipline result from this discussion of the Law of Habit. We have seen that this constant calling forth of particular desirable actions, either, best of all, through the encouragement of the child's own right impulses, or, in the last resort, by means of punishment or reward, results in the formation of memory paths in the brain corresponding with the course of thought, and making the doing of right actions increasingly easy. These paths are formed by constant repetition, from which, if possible, there should be no deviation. What does this amount to, when interpreted from the point of view of the general discipline of the nursery and schoolroom?

(1) First, in most children, when quite young, there is a naturally strong tendency to respond to suggestions. This should be used whenever possible, since the habit is then formed with less effort, and the memory paths are imprinted the more firmly on the child's mind when we use his natural impulses. *The habit we wish the child to acquire or the command we intend him to obey, must therefore be, whenever possible, presented so brightly as to seize hold of his imagination.* When

this is accomplished, no spirit of rebellion is aroused, and the suggested idea naturally realizes itself in action. The child follows the suggestions we offer, and, in so doing, obeys of his own free will.

(2) Secondly, if the child fails to respond to our suggestions, we are at liberty to discourage such failure by artificial means. We must make considerable effort to attain the doing of the right action, whether the child is in a responsive or in a contrary mood. *In all cases, the voluntary doing of the right action should be rewarded with approval*, and the child is then conscious of a sense of harmony with his surroundings; *disobedience, or non-responsiveness, should be met with disapproval*, and result in a loss of such harmonious feeling. If the child's life is full of joy and sympathy, even the small baby of eighteen months or younger, will be unhappy when we do not approve, and, in his baby way, will try to coax back a smile into our faces. Both encouragement and discouragement have their rightful place in discipline.

(3) Thirdly, too many people should not be managing the child at once—for different people will in all probability mean different standards of action, and confusion must result. *It should be an understood thing that the child is not expected to obey every grown person*—only the father, the mother, the nurse and the teacher, and anyone put in authority on any special occasion; and that these should, as far as possible, expect the same standard of behaviour from the child, in order that good habits may be more readily acquired. We are trying to form certain memory paths in the child's mind by means of repeated acts. Any exception, resulting from the enforcement of a different standard of action, undoes much of the work. Moreover, a large part of the child's happiness consists in a sense of harmony with his surroundings; for this the child naturally seeks, striving to assimilate his conduct to the examples, customs and ideals he finds around him. Such harmony is less easily attained when the

discipline of the nursery differs from that of the dining-room, the home from that of the school—or when, even in the nursery, the child is permitted at one time what he is refused the next.

(4) Fourthly, *we must give the child ample opportunity for the expression of his desires and check his initiative as little as possible*, since the child's own desires, rightly trained and directed, are a force which we need to use in forming his habits. Constant checks are only irritating, and tend to create in him a desire for rebellion. "Don't say 'don't' without first considering whether it is necessary"—should be one of the first maxims in both home and school life.

(5) And finally, we need, in the formation of habits, to *respect each child's individuality*, and not to exert, either by praise or by blame, too dominant an influence. To form good habits does not mean merely to produce a number of pattern children; we want something more than mere good behaviour.

These, then, are the main points to be borne in mind in connexion with the general method of training the children in good habits. Such training is not always an easy matter. Progress is often slow, actions which have long ago become almost second nature to us, or which seem simple, are hard for the children to acquire. We are constantly repeating the same orders, checking the same faults. In a group of small children, their imitative instincts are used in copying each other's troublesome little tricks of behaviour rather than the decent manners of the grown-up people! But we ought neither to grow weary nor to despair, for we are not only creating special habits, we are gaining influence over the children and forming the basis of character. In the often wearisome task of forming the simpler habits, such as attention, order or neatness, behaviour at table, punctuality or cleanliness, we need constantly to bear this thought in mind "The habits of obedience and trust . . . established by the exercise of authority resting on its own right, can be enlisted later on in the

service of the aim of all true discipline, the production of a self-governing being."<sup>1</sup>

It may seem to some that the practical suggestions given in this chapter are needless. Quiet, even discipline, a simple method of frequent correction, coupled with the ordinary punishments which are said for generations to have proved effectual, they have found sufficient to produce good results. Why go out of our way to make the acquisition of good habits especially interesting? Why study the children, in order to find, at the right moment, good impulses upon which good habits may be grafted? Before our own day, children were not so studied; is it not possible that a method involving less thought may lead to equally satisfactory, if not to more satisfactory, results? The answer to such an argument seems to me to be this. Some children are comparatively easy to deal with, whether at home or at school. Possessing good health and a stable nervous system, inheriting a minimum of undesirable impulses and a large proportion of strong and desirable impulses, living in a social environment which helps them towards right thinking and doing, and responsive to the good influences which are brought to bear upon them—such children almost train themselves into good habits; no special thought is required. But it is surely a matter of experience that others, in an equally stimulating environment, are not so responsive. Their natures are perhaps more complex; strong undesirable impulses are at war with their desirable impulses; they are less open to receiving impressions from those in whose charge they are placed; they follow their own bent—sometimes in pursuit of good, often in pursuit of bad, ends. Such children, difficult to deal with, are often only in need of being understood. Some people, gifted with special insight, just because they understand, get the best out of them; in the hands of others, they are as "naughty" as they can possibly be.

<sup>1</sup> "The Child," by W B Drummond.

Good habits are formed with difficulty ; often, at any rate while they are in the nursery, they are not formed at all, and the child has to be sent away to boarding school "to be licked into shape" Surely it is a confession of failure on our part if either boys or girls have to be sent away, because there is no managing them at home. Our method has evidently been at fault. Special understanding and care were required, and we have somehow not given them.

Not only do we often fail completely in the management of certain difficult children, but we also permit many to grow up with faults of temperament which, though not making them unendurable in the home, nevertheless may be a serious handicap to their mental or moral growth. We too readily, for instance, treat such faults as a want of concentration and thoroughness in work, a hasty temper, a sluggish disposition, timidity or jealousy, as if they were as much part of the child's inheritance, as inevitable, as the colour of his eyes or hair ! Because we do not think sufficiently, we blame Heredity instead of ourselves. We can do much to modify character. Nature is *on* our side as well as against us, and when she is against us as regards the inherited impulses of the child, she is *for* us in this, that every impression which we fix upon the child's mind is retained there, and that any action which we insist upon the child's doing once, he does the more easily the next time, and each time with increasing ease.

It is in such difficult cases that it pays us to go out of our way to make the process of acquiring habits interesting, to avoid difficulties by forestalling wrong doing. The more we can get such children *with* us rather than *against* us, the more we can strengthen, by every means in our power, the good impulses they possess—the better for us in our life with them in home or school, the better for them for all time.

Taking for granted, then, that some people possess a natural genius in dealing with children, and that some

children are so easily trained that no special thought is required, for the sake of the "difficult" children a few practical suggestions are offered.

In illustration of the main principles involved in the psychology of habit, let us take first the learning to write, for the actions involved in writing, though at first acquired consciously and with difficulty, gradually become habitual and automatic. Some children require no special stimulation in the gaining of this, any more than of any other habit. Pleasantly and readily they follow the suggestions of the grown-up person, and practise their lines and loops, their pot-hooks and hangers, without becoming tired by the continual doing of actions, prompted from without rather than within, without finding the work drudgery. Under a mechanical method of teaching, others would, however, make but slow progress. Careful and exact work comes hardly to them, constant repetition is a weariness; their attention tends to wander constantly from the less interesting matter, which should be in the focus of their minds, to the more interesting things, which are constantly straying in from the margin. Yet, by these children, too, the habit of good writing has to be acquired; as the result of repetition, memory-paths must be formed in their consciousness, along which thought will travel, so that the right actions become habitual.

In what way, then, is the psychology of habit made use of in our modern methods of teaching the child to write?

If he makes rows of straight strokes, we suggest that they represent a long row of soldiers, marching in ordered line past the inspecting officer. His interest and imagination are aroused. Care and attention become worth while, for the regiment is surely disgraced if many of the soldiers fail to hold themselves erect as they march!

If, at a later stage, letters have to be made uniform

in size, drawn accurately between the lines, we may suggest that Master Point must now move slowly and carefully from the bottom to the top of the house, he must never go through the ceiling on to the roof, nor down the floor into the cellar! No break must be made in his steady progress; little Master Point cannot yet jump, he can only crawl! So letter by letter is practised separately. But, as Master Point grows more capable and independent, he begins to creep from one letter-house to the next, moving slowly along the whole row of houses which we call a "word." When he can do this, now and again, between the words, he dares to leave his paper-world, and to jump from the end of one word to the beginning of the next.

Whether, as in the "Look and Say" method, the words are at first regarded as complete wholes, thought-signs expressed on paper, which the child observes and draws, as he might try to draw a ship or a man, or whether they are built up of separate letters, each a sign for a sound, the principles involved in forming with ease the habit of writing are the same. The work is made interesting; for interest lessens the strain of attention and counterbalances the monotony of repetition; that to which the child *likes* to attend, he finds it easier to remember.

The imaginative child is so ready to be interested. He invents his own simple tale, and sees it written down for others to read, in the "Look and Say" method; or we weave a story about Master Point, and, with his pencil, he follows our suggestions, interested, attending, enjoying; and at the same time, all unconsciously, acquires the habit of correct writing.

But correctness is not all; freedom of movement, which gives a wider range of power, is as necessary as accuracy in detail. Big sheets of brown paper and coloured crayons, chalk and a plain linoleum fixed around the room to give ample black-board space for each child, are better for this purpose than pencil

and smaller paper. Freely and boldly, the children sketch the shapes which resemble the letters, and experience the joy of creation by investing these shapes with reality. They draw a number of round o's, a tiny stalk is attached to each, there are apples enough to satisfy them all! Birds fill the heavens when they practise the forms (λ) wanted when they write their t's, i's and u's, etc., and a few clouds in the sky complete the picture. Snakes twist about as they practise the printed s, and, with the addition of green-chalk grass and a few bushes, they are living in the jungle. Hand, eye and ear, the powers of observation and of comparison, are being simultaneously trained; but the work is made alive through imagination and the joy of creation. It is done with less effort, it is remembered better. It is *mere* repetition which dulls interest, weakens memory and leads to inattention. If attention is paid—and attention depends on interest—then, and only then, is it true that the more frequently an impression is made, the more firmly it is registered on the brain.

The fact that writing, good or bad, is a *habit* is often forgotten. Bad habits can only be uprooted by the constant and persistent calling forth of right actions, *as far as possible without exception*, and it is because the ill effect of such exceptions is not realized that the effort to improve an older child's handwriting so often fails. It is taken for granted that *all* the written work of the class must be done by each individual member of that class, whether or no he is at the same time striving to improve his handwriting, and this almost obliges the child to continue to do much of his work in the faulty handwriting, which has become easy and natural to him, practising the better writing only occasionally. He is therefore attempting to acquire the new habit, in spite of those continual exceptions which undo so much of the work of improvement. If the bad habit is to be supplanted as quickly as possible, for a time no exception must be permitted.



Only, in that case, he must be expected to do a part only of the written work set in the time allowed.

In the creation of good habits, as in the correction of bad ones, whatever the habit is, it is repeated right actions only which can bring about the formation of the right stimulus-to-action paths in the brain. The good habit, when acquired, is due, not to our repeated instructions, which are merely impressions from without, though these are of some help, but to *the child's interested co-operation, which alone sets going the real springs of action.*

This necessity for whole-heartedness in right action on the child's part cannot be exaggerated: talking on our part never does any good, unless we see that the child not only listens, but understands, and therefore desires to do. Repeatedly the teacher had called Sidney to order for fidgeting with his pencil during the lesson, but he had got into the habit of fidgeting, he did not know when he was doing it, and talking was of no avail. Referring one day to his teacher's constant and fruitless efforts to cure him of his trick, he indignantly exclaimed: "He has never tried to *cure* me, he has only *jawed*."

In the formation of habits, four "Golden Rules" can be laid down, of which perhaps the first is the most important.

(1) *Do not "preach" to the child, for it is only by repeated actions on the child's part that the habit can be formed.*

(2) *Begin early to insist on right actions, for, by beginning early, we make it easier for the child.*

(3) *Provide frequent opportunities for constant practice until we have obtained the invariable performance of the actions on which we lay stress.*

(4) *Realize the difficulty, in certain cases, of those actions on which we are insisting, and therefore find some way of gaining the child's sympathy and interest.*

It is resource which we need beyond everything, that we may be able to make interesting what is naturally uninteresting.

Florence, for instance, cannot deliver a simple message correctly; she is inaccurate and forgetful, and running messages "bothers" her. We make our plans to help her. While we are busy with Baby or sewing in the nursery, we can play at "shopping" with her. Eagerly, Florence will remember a long list of things which are wanted at the grocer's, over by the chest of drawers; another difficult message will be delivered at the butcher's, not a detail forgotten. This is all play to her; but her memory is being trained, and later on real messages will be carried to Mother the more accurately.

Bobby, the tiny soldier of four, finds it, as a rule, very hard to obey promptly—but if Nurse pretends to be his commanding officer, he drills in his very best style, giving his full attention to her commands; and the *habit* of attention and prompt obedience is thereby cultivated.

Edward, like the mock hero in Charles Lamb's poem, cries lustily over the smallest hurt, and rushes screaming to Nurse if a dog only looks at him in the street. A paper pinned up on the wall, on which day by day Edward makes a red chalk mark every time he displays unwonted courage, fires him with a strong desire to overcome his fears, and his "bravery chart" each day gleams with more and more of the soldier's scarlet. The children are for the most part so ready to respond, so quickly interested, we ought never to be daunted in the formation of any desirable habit. Granted that we are bearing these rules in mind, we ought, like the proverbial Englishman, never to know when we are beaten.

In a family of high-spirited children, behaviour at meals often presents, at home, frequent difficulties. Good behaviour should gradually become automatic,

or very nearly so ; but when a number of children of different ages are together in the nursery, full of life and energy, brimming over with mischief and fun, it is by no means an easy matter. Sometimes the elder children are the chief cause of the difficulty. Fresh from school, where their natural instincts in the direction of movement and noise have been to a certain extent suppressed, there is "steam to be let off" at dinner-time. There is so much to tell and so much to hear, so many points of interest in connexion with school to discuss, so much spare physical energy, they have but little attention to give to the hundred and one details which constitute good manners. The little ones, steadier for their exercise in the open air, and fresh after their morning rest, could probably behave well without much difficulty, if they were alone—but they are infected by the frolic of the others, and imitate them in their mischief as far as they are able. Or perhaps the baby is the chief cause of meal-time difficulties. He is beginning to feed himself and the process does not occupy his whole attention. He stretches across the table in the effort to reach a tumbler, and over goes the water. He plays with the knives and forks of those who are nearest him, or tries to pull their hair ; he uses the wrong hand to feed himself, or nearly chokes in the effort to eat too quickly. His mischief is infectious ; the rest of the family forget all about manners, and need constant keeping in order—yet almost the whole of our attention is obliged to be given to looking after that one dear baby !

Suppose the older children are the ringleaders, silence for a while may help to solve the difficulty. When no talking is allowed, they are free to pay attention to what they are doing ; and a few minutes' silence at the start, or at any time during the meal when manners are getting slack, serves to steady the children for some little time after. Only experience can show if silence is beneficial, and if so, for how long a time

it is required ; but if it answers our purpose, it should be imposed *in order to help the children* to remember the good manners which are so essential, and *not as a punishment*.

Chattering and fidgeting are natural, especially after a morning of work, and there is nothing "naughty" in forgetting the many tiny details which, though important to us, must seem unimportant to children. Silence for a time reduces the number of outside interests, which, by comparison, make good behaviour still less interesting ; and it is from this point of view that we impose it. If the children still find it hard to behave, we can help them further by specially rewarding the effort which we know it is hard for them to make. For instance, a "meal chart," ruled in columns for the different days and the different children and pinned up on the nursery wall, on which they put a red mark for good, and a black mark for bad behaviour, helps to make it more interesting to behave well. In a wholesome way, they try, day by day, to beat their own record, and each child tries to get his column as red as possible ! Any plan will do. Different methods will answer with different children, but the principle is always the same—in cases of special difficulty, add an artificial interest to what is naturally uninteresting.

But very possibly the baby is the unconscious ringleader of the disorder : then only experience can prove to us to what an extent the demoralizing influence which he exerts is due to the freedom permitted to that left hand—a freedom which he naturally abuses ! If that hand is fastened out of the way, he needs but little supervision ; we are free to attend to the other children, consequently all goes smoothly ; and Baby himself no more objects to having his hand fastened than he does to have his feeder put on, both are simply part of the process of having a meal. If we forget, and when he has begun his mischievous tricks, call him "naughty," and try to restrict his

liberty, he objects lustily ; but he would equally object to having his feeder put on in the middle of the meal after being blamed for soiling his frock !

We need to understand *why* every now and again good behaviour is difficult, and, by understanding, conquer the difficulty, rather than blame the children. For instance, it often makes all the difference at meal-times, as at school, how we seat the children, and in particular which children sit on either side of us. Bobby and Cuthbert, aged three and a half and five, gave no end of trouble at nursery meals, and which was the worst of the two it would have been hard to say, for whatever the one did which he should not, the other copied. Meal after meal Bobby sat opposite Cuthbert ; and neither correction nor punishment was of any avail. It was finally suggested to Nurse that the boys should sit on the *same* side of the table, and that she should sit between them. The problem of their bad behaviour was solved at once ! They could no longer see one another, only Nurse, and she was up to no naughty tricks !

Such small details often make all the difference between good and bad behaviour in a nursery full of impressionable, excitable children. Meal-time difficulties are legion ! Some children either will not or cannot eat certain kinds of food—others dawdle or dream over their meals—others are in such a hurry to finish eating that they cannot be taught to “masticate, denticate, grind, and chew, before they swallow.” Always our main thought in overcoming our difficulties is the same—*understand the difficulty, lessen the temptation to fall into bad habits, increase the desire to get into good habits.*

Evelyn, aged three and a half, is a sad dawdler over her meals ; her appetite is small and capricious ; the other people at the table are interesting to listen to and to watch. Her attention is concentrated on them, not on her food, she forgets all about eating, and constant reminders are both useless and trying. By

putting her in a room alone to eat her meals, we can lessen the temptation to look about her. If we can make her weary of her solitude, we shall increase her desire to eat properly and so rejoin the others. Evelyn, with only small helpings, was therefore sent to a room alone; if she had finished at the same time as the others, she came back at once into the nursery; otherwise she had to wait until Nurse was free to come and attend to her. For ten days she dawdled; but at last she began to weary of the long waitings for Nurse and to give her mind to getting done in time. In three weeks, the bad habit was cured and she rejoined the others—the very suggestion of a meal alone being enough to make her hurry, whenever for a minute she forgot and dreamed again.

Norman was so eager to leave the table and get back to his engine, or so busy talking, that he “bolted” his food—he either had on every occasion to sit till the rest had finished, or he practised silence until he had learnt to give his mind to chewing properly.

Jessie was unable to eat even a spoonful of tapioca pudding without being sick. On one occasion, it was suggested that she should go as a weekly boarder to her school instead of as a day girl, and her mother said that she would tell the teacher about the tapioca. “No, no, Mother,” urged Jessie, “don’t tell her, I could eat it there.”

Without doubt, our minds have an extraordinary influence over our bodies. Food, which cannot be swallowed in the presence of some people, can be eaten alone, or in the presence of others of whom we are in awe. Food disliked under one name can be eaten, slightly disguised, under another name. Only experience of our own can prove to us the extent to which dislikes in food can be overcome. They are well worth overcoming. We should show no dislikes ourselves; we should insist upon a morsel—a teaspoonful at the outside—of all ordinary wholesome food being eaten; we should permit no expression of

dislike at the table, for children are imitative in this respect; and when the difficulty seems insurmountable, we should try the effect of solitude. It is the presence of other people, sympathetic or otherwise, which increases the child's agitation, and may actually render the physical act of swallowing difficult to perform. If only we persevere, one by one the children's difficulties are overcome, and they will look back with surprise on the time when Brussels sprouts, milk or suet puddings were distasteful to them, or when, like Augustus, they could not eat soup!

The object to be aimed at is to form in the children the habit of eating all good food, without at the same time being hard upon them. The quiet expectation of sensible behaviour, and disregard, as far as possible, of foolishness and hysteria; sympathetic and steady discipline; plenty of humour and resource in dealing with the little ones; and a capacity to arouse the interest of the bigger ones in the dull details of good behaviour; an avoidance of nagging and frequent ineffective punishments—this is what we need in striving for good meal-time habits, just as in striving for good behaviour in any other direction. If one plan fails, we must try to discover why it failed, and adopt another.

#### THE ELEMENT OF CHOICE IN MORAL ACTIONS

So far I have dealt with those habits in which the mere *doing* was the important matter, apart from any special motive-force within the child. Desire, however, must be awakened even if habits of concentration, the habit of self-control in the face of small troubles, habits of accuracy and tidiness, of good behaviour at meals, and so forth, are to be deeply engrained, so that they gradually become more or less mechanical.

Still more must moral actions be the outcome of desire and not the result merely of habits impressed from without. The child must understand "*why*"

these things are right. An action cannot be called moral unless the child has *chosen* to do it ; his choice depends on right impulses to action from within. Training in moral habits involves, then, the encouragement of the good, and not merely the discouragement of the bad, desires.

The question of punishment is dealt with in a later chapter. It is rarely needed ; it is frequently used and indeed often regarded as a " rudder of education."

Some children are particularly difficult to deal with. Their undesirable tendencies are so strong and insistent that many hold that it is only when these are weakened by pain that their good impulses have a chance of showing themselves. In the case of strong-willed and responsive children, strong in their bad equally with their good impulses, we need not be unduly anxious ; firm guidance, combined with a just appreciation of their point of view, will tell in time, for they are strong. It is the unimpressionable, troublesome children who are so difficult to deal with. All our efforts to develop their good impulses seem at times almost unavailing. We must study to understand them, love them dearly, for they need it sorely, and endeavour to arouse in them some feeling of respect for themselves and others, if we are to develop their characters. But, at the same time, we must expect less from them, and not be readily discouraged. Their good desires will develop but slowly, their bad desires die a hard death. Such children are however exceptional. For the most part, children want to be good—and are ready and quick to respond to any attempt on our part to draw out the good in them

Habits of virtue result mainly from the gradual strengthening of right impulses by constant use. Through repeated opportunities of doing for others, the boy grows more and more unselfish, until it becomes natural to him to *choose* increasingly the unselfish course of action. Through difficulties properly faced, he grows braver and braver, until fear becomes less



and less possible to him. "Good habits must be rooted in strong and promising instincts."

Let us then consider, from this point of view, the growth of such a habit as that of courage. What are the good impulses which we can, in this case, find and foster, so that, in their presence, lack of self-control, timidity, self-distrust, will gradually cease to exist? Such impulses are many, but they are often ignored. When a small child falls and hurts himself, do we not frequently hear the nurse trying to distract his attention from his own injury by arousing his sense of anger towards the object which has been the cause of his hurt? "Naughty floor to hurt Baby. Nurse will slap the naughty floor." The baby begins to forget his hurt in his interest in what is being said. "Baby hit the naughty floor himself," suggests Nurse. It is extraordinary, when we come to think of it, how frequently the small child is taught self-control in these early days by this method of revenge—a method which is untrue in itself and also calls out undesirable impulses in the child. It hardly seems necessary to criticize such a method in detail, to refer to it at all in this connexion is enough to expose, not only its weakness, but also its harm.

*Good habits are best cultivated by strengthening and calling forth on all occasions the right impulses which tend in the direction of those habits. If such impulses are too weak to be made use of, we must encourage even their slight manifestations, call them forth by all means in our power, and when they have become strengthened, see that the child uses them on every occasion.*

What are the impulses which can be used—and rightly used—in the cultivation of the child's habit of bravely facing pain or trouble? His natural curiosity and interest in things outside himself can be encouraged, so that in the end he may forget his fears. For instance, John was staying at a farm-house and feared the geese. The farm lad told him that "Father goose was only taking the young ones out for a walk,

while the mother sat on the eggs, so as to get some more children. The father was taking care of them, and he would only run after you like a policeman if you hurt his children!" Such an explanation roused John's interest and sympathy; it seemed so real and natural; he was not afraid of policemen or of fathers, why then should he be afraid of good Father goose!

Another natural impulse, on the development of which we can rely as the child grows, is his sense of trust and security in the strength of others—in the grown-up people around him, his father, his mother, his nurse, his teachers—and pre-eminently in God. We do not merely tell him that his fears are ridiculous and groundless—even though they may seem so from our standpoint. We gradually help him to establish the habit of confidence in the knowledge that we, that God, will take care of him.

Some children are keenly anxious to grow up, to grow big and be like father or mother, or some big brother who is, in their eyes, a hero. Others long to be soldiers. Such desires can be turned to good account. "Father is brave and strong, if you want to be like Father, you too must try hard to be brave." "If you want to be a soldier when you are big, you must begin to be brave now, as if you were at any rate a little drummer boy."

Lewis, aged five, loved the hymn "Onward, Christian Soldiers." To be a Christian soldier, as far as he understood what it meant, was his ideal. Clearly it must mean bravery over small hurts, even bravery when dogs were met! Dogs were his one great dread. Saying to himself the chorus of the hymn, "Onward, Christian Soldiers," bravely he tried to pass them by. He never could get further than the word "onward," he *was* afraid, his head was turned over his shoulder, looking at the dogs, as he said the words—but he learnt to pass them, and his fear departed!

One word of caution. It is not well for us to expect too much self-control from a naturally nervous child

in these early years ; the strain of self-control would be great, and it is better that his natural feelings should find some outlet. We can slowly cultivate his power of self-control, but we should expect only gradually to overcome his fears.

On the other hand, when we are dealing with a child who is naturally free from fear, we should allow whatever natural capacity for courage he possesses, to grow, and not stunt it by encouraging the instinct of fear through our excessive sympathy. There is no need to be nervous lest the child should fall as soon as he begins to be venturesome, nor to run and pick him up every time he tumbles, anxious lest he should have hurt himself. If we do, he will almost *expect* to be injured the next time he falls, and will learn to look for sympathy.

The principle is the same in the cultivation of the impulse of unselfishness. We can foster every impulse which the child possesses which tends in this direction. We can encourage his pleasure in sharing his toys and help him to realize the delight, and the privilege, of making others happy. We can see that the child not only receives a visit from Santa Claus every Christmas, but is himself a Santa Claus and fills some poor children's stockings. On his birthday, we can help him to find some poor boy who has a birthday too, and let his birthday present include gifts for both—any plan will do which fosters his joy in giving. Children in the middle and upper classes receive so much, and often have comparatively few opportunities for giving. Toys, for the most part, can belong to the nursery commonwealth, given to a particular child, but given for the enjoyment of all. We can foster in the child his "good gift of loving" ; and help him to love *many* people, instead of being proud, as we often are, of his somewhat exclusive love for ourselves. We can encourage his spirit of helpfulness and joy in doing for others ; the desire to help is common to all children, but it is a capricious impulse generally, and needs

careful cultivation. In every way, we can seek to develop his good, unselfish tendencies, so discouraging his tendency to be selfish that it finds but little scope.

One further point deserves notice. Occasionally, the child's selfish impulses are unconsciously fostered by grown-up people. They do not seem to realize, for instance, the harm that may be done by the constant saying to the elder child, when a little baby arrives, "Now your nose is put out of joint, you are not the only baby now!"

Maud had a delightfully affectionate and responsive nature for the first three years of her life, that is, until the second baby came. It was her mother's first day down, and naturally she ran, as before, to clamber up on her knee. To her surprise and pain, she was checked, and told that now she was too big to be nursed, Mother had the baby to look after. Maud said nothing. She ran away sulkily, apparently. But from that day, she was a changed child. Surely Maud could have been made glad in the baby's coming—feeling that Mother had plenty of room in her heart for two. that Baby was something for her to enjoy as well as Mother, a "real live dolly" who would respond to all her little attentions!

The first child will naturally feel "out of it" when the second comes, if we do not deliberately bring her *into* it again, it is hard for most of us to share what we have before been having all to ourselves. Why should not the first child grow to love *all* babies, before the one baby comes to share the love and attentions of Mother and Nurse? We can take her "baby-visiting" among our friends, and let her get used to seeing a baby in our arms, let her feel the baby in hers, and she will gradually realize how proud she would feel, if only the little baby were her very own. Is it certain that we should jump for joy if suddenly someone came to share with us all that was once ours and ours alone? With a little more imagination and thought on our

part, "jealous" would be a word, as a rule, inapplicable to children.

Habits of virtue, like all other habits, are begun in the nursery. We are able there to give the child a good start in the right direction. The right start means much. But, in the early forming of all habits, we must not expect too much in a short time, and, above all things, we need to be keenly aware of the danger of moral forcing. The times in the nursery when the average child is conscious of wrong-doing, or self-conscious at all, should, as far as lies in our power, be few and far between. To very young children we should not give reasons on every occasion, or at any rate, not let the child expect them to be given. Rather should he know by instinct, if we may put it so, that we have reasons. Motives should not be urged more than is necessary, we can safely take for granted that the right motive is there, and for the most part it will be there. The nature of our commands should be such as to allow the child, wherever possible, freedom of choice, we should give him time to choose. Unnecessary conflicts between his will and ours, between pleasure and duty, should be avoided—but a feeling of law and order and goodness should be as the air which he breathes. He will form ideals, they should be simple, true to his child-world, not to our world. So will he grow to love goodness and to work towards it, but in all unconsciousness, as a plant grows towards the light. Moreover, there is that in the nature of most children, as in the nature of the plant, which makes them grow towards goodness if we give them the chance, and only on occasions, and those important ones, should we need to draw their attention to the light towards which they are growing.

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## CHAPTER VII

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WILL

It is important that the child should *desire* the good habits, i.e., use his own will in the right direction—Meaning of the term "Will", the consciousness of a desire and the direction of the child's activities towards its attainment—Five stages in the development of the will :

(1) The child puts forth an effort *immediately* to attain the satisfaction of any desire

(2) The child is able to exercise some slight degree of *control*, but only for a moment, and only in response to suggestion from without

(3) The child becomes *conscious of his own will-power*, he therefore desires above all else to use his own will, he is therefore self-willed or "contrary."

(4) The result of experience leads to a conflict in the child's mind between two opposing ideas, causing delay, and giving opportunity for thought before action, the child is called upon to *choose*

(5) A conflict occurs between a number of opposing ideas, and results in a prolonged period of hesitation and deliberation, before a decision is finally reached, the child is called upon to *judge*

Difference between impulsive and deliberate action—Moral judgment involves —

- (1) The knowledge of right
- (2) The desire for the right.
- (3) The habit of intelligent right action
- (4) The gaining of self-mastery.

In the last two chapters, I have more than once referred to the fact that it is important, as far as possible, not merely to impose the good habit on the child from without, but to get the child on our side in the *desiring* of the habit, that is, to get him to use his own will in the right direction.

What do we mean when we speak of the will? The word is familiar enough; struggles in the nursery, between the self-will of the children and the will of the grown-up persons in charge, are also familiar enough. But what the will is, how it develops, how we can best

train it so that it is rightly used, —on these matters we are not always so clear. What then do we mean when we use the term "Will?"

Martha, aged three, objected to taking her medicine ; so far it had been a simple matter to force it down, but the time had come when it was desirable that she should be able to take it alone. Persisting in her refusal, she was put into a room by herself. The blind was drawn, she had nothing to play with, sounds of frolic reached her from the nursery ; yet there she sat for nearly two hours, and nothing would induce her to open her mouth. Once she forgot and took the medicine when Nurse, dressed as a doctor in Father's overcoat, brought it to her. But no sooner was it in her mouth than she remembered, and put it all out again ! Not until two and a half hours had passed, did she weary of her persistent refusal, and yield. What a will the mite possessed to hold out for so long ! —is our instinctive comment.

Cuthbert and Meg are playing in the garden ; Cuthbert has an engine ; Meg, a horse. Cuthbert wants to change toys with Meg. "Let me have the horse for a bit, will you?" he asks ; but Meg refuses. "Meg, darling," we hear him say in a few minutes, in a coaxing voice, "you can play at going from Manchester to London with this engine, it's such fun ; you try for a bit !" But no, Meg knows her own mind and will not change. Cuthbert coaxes ; he insists—but Meg is obdurate ; and finally he knocks her down and takes the horse by force. Again we should comment on the strong wills of both children.

Baby is sitting in her cot, quiet and happy. She has found a small hole in the wall where she can poke the plaster with one tiny finger. "No, no, Baby," she hears Nurse say from the other end of the room. The hands go back under the bed-clothes, but for a moment only ; the hole is too fascinating ! Again Nurse checks her, and finally slaps that disobedient hand ; but Baby's distress is soon over, and, in spite

of punishment, she again puts her finger in that hole. Persistently she uses her own will in defiance of Nurse.

In each case, the child knew what he or she wanted, and strove to satisfy that want. Martha desired not to take the medicine ; with all her might she strove to achieve that end. Cuthbert wanted the horse and so did Meg ; both did their utmost to possess it. Baby wanted to pick the plaster out of the hole ; she, too, mite though she was, consciously persisted in satisfying her want.

Will is this and nothing more—the consciousness of a desire and the direction of the child's activities towards its attainment. Our wills gradually grow in strength and the activities directed by them increase in complexity ; our desires become more numerous and vary in character, growing less concrete, less simple ; our activities increase in range and complexity ; the power to attain our desires varies and strengthens with experience—our will therefore grows stronger. But, however wide our experiences, however difficult of attainment our desire, when there is a felt want and a corresponding effort, will is used and it grows strong with practice.

In considering the growth of the will in early childhood, we can distinguish five distinct stages. The first, or the simplest form of will, is seen in the first few months of life, when the baby *desires something and immediately puts forth an effort to attain it*. He sees a bright light before him and at once strives to reach it ; he hears the sound of his mother's voice and at once cries to be taken up ; directly he is conscious of hunger, he cries for food. As he grows stronger, his desires increase in intensity ; as his senses develop, he gets to desire more and more, as his memory grows, his desires become less dependent upon the mere physical sensations of the moment ; as his knowledge of the outer world, his control over his own movements and his muscular powers develop,



the efforts which he makes to satisfy his desires become less crude. He gains a clearer idea of what he wants, and wants more; he strives harder, more persistently, and with greater capacity; he becomes capable of exercising judgment and control—but, at times, he no sooner wants than he strives to get. His will is then still at the first stage.

In the first few months of his life, the baby exercises no judgment, no power of control, but, very early in his life, the baby becomes capable of exercising some degree of conscious control. Sitting in his high chair in the nursery, he is perhaps occupying himself by throwing his bricks persistently down on the floor, merely desiring to see us stoop to pick them up. We watch him closely, the little hand holding the brick moves again to the side of the chair, but in response to our firm, "No, no, baby," he draws it back. The desire to drop it is still there, and the natural expression of that desire in action has been voluntarily or involuntarily controlled—but only in response to our spoken command, and only for a moment. His memory is weak, his power of control slight, he is not yet aware that he possesses a will of his own, that he has the power in him to satisfy, or to control the satisfaction of, his desires; he exercises no judgment, however simple. This, then, constitutes the second stage in the process of development. *The child is now capable of exercising some slight degree of control, but only for a moment, only when prompted from without;* self-control proper—the conscious power to master his own impulses—has yet to come.

About the middle of the second year of his life, he enters on a new stage in the growth of his character—a stage sometimes delayed because the child is over-disciplined or allowed to remain too long a baby, sometimes much prolonged because those in charge of the child are ignorant as to how to deal with him. When the child reaches the third stage, he is beginning to be aware of the fact that he is an individual, that he

can obey or disobey as he chooses, either satisfy his impulses or control them. He now knows that he possesses the power of will; and just as, when he first began to walk, day after day he toddled here and toddled there, rejoicing in the mere exercise of his new powers; so now he uses his own will, not so much in the pursuit of special desires, as for the sheer love of willing. "Shake hands with the lady"—away go his hands behind his back! "Dinner is ready, Baby, come along"—he may have been fretting for food a minute before, but away he runs out of our reach! "Don't step in the puddles"—and in he splashes! We turn down one road for a walk; he immediately desires to go down another! We give him his favourite picture book—he no longer fancies it! He revels in disobedience, not because he desires to give us trouble, but because he *consciously wants to use his own will*, even in defiance of ours. We call him disobedient or contrary, but this third stage is only the natural outcome of his newly acquired consciousness of the power that lies within him. He will have to learn the meaning of obedience, but it is wise to permit him as much freedom as possible, and, whenever possible, meet him on his own ground, because we understand how natural and right is this desire of his to control his own actions. We need not worry over his "contrariness." Just as he ceased to run aimlessly from chair to chair when walking was no longer a novelty, so—if we manage him with tact and firmness—he will cease to disobey merely for the sake of disobeying. Gradually he will find out that disobedience does not "pay"; that if he falls in with Nurse's suggestions in certain directions, he will gain more freedom to use his own will in other directions. He will begin to foresee some of the after-consequences of his impulsive actions, and to take these into account. Yesterday he stepped in the puddle after Nurse had told him not to, and, sad to say, he had to ride home in the mail-cart! He threw his toy out of the window,

just for fun, when Nurse had said "No," and he was not able to get it until they went out in the afternoon! He insisted upon climbing up the attic stairs, although Nurse said they were too steep for him to go up alone; he fell and hurt himself! Such experiences are necessarily deeply impressed on his mind; he can no longer blindly follow out the first idea which comes into his head; a doubt now arises as to the advisability of so doing, and he has to choose between two different alternatives. He longs to splash in the puddle, but he also wants to walk and not ride—which shall it be? He longs to explore the far distant attic, but his head ached with the bruise the other day; shall he risk it again?

There is a conflict of thoughts in his mind. Instead of *immediately* satisfying or controlling his desires as before, instead of *immediately* using his will for its own sake, apart from consequences, he delays and that gives him time for thought. He is called upon, for the first time in his life, to *choose*. This, then, is the fourth stage in the development of the will, when *two opposing ideas conflict in the child's mind, causing a delay, and therefore giving him an opportunity for thinking before acting*.

Two children, Frank and Mary, aged three and a half and two and a half, were given some chocolates just before dinner, but they had to wait until after dinner to eat them. Frank begged to be allowed to have them beside him on the table, promising not to touch them till he got permission; Mary, echoing her brother, cried: "Chust me too, Mother." Both children were "trusted"; he restrained from eating them; she popped one into her mouth the first minute her mother's back was turned! In Frank's mind, there were two conflicting desires—the desire for the chocolate and the desire to be trusted; the latter was strong enough to prevent him touching the sweets; he could have been trusted equally with chocolates by the side of his bed ready for the morning,

and, even though left alone to go to sleep, he would never have touched them. His will power had reached this fourth stage, in which he was able to choose between two conflicting desires. But Mary was capable of no such restraining impulse; only while her mother's eye was upon her was she capable of not touching the chocolates; her will had not yet progressed beyond stage three!

Arthur, aged five, had had an atlas given him, his sister wanted him to lend it to her to look at. But he wanted to keep it all to himself. His mother tried to persuade him to be generous, but he could not part with it. A little time after, whilst he was being dressed to go out, he suddenly burst out laughing. "I heard a voice inside me say, all of a sudden, 'Give it to her, give it to her,'" he said, and he gave it. Two conflicting desires had been struggling for the mastery, when the one suddenly presented itself to him so vividly that he heard, as it were, a human voice.

Neville was only five. One Sunday afternoon, he went for a walk with his father through a woodland path, that led past an old saw-mill, worked by water-power. Being a hot summer afternoon, they rested for a while under a tree. Presently, little Neville scampered away to the mill race, and was soon deeply interested in the contrivance by which the supply of water to the wheel was regulated. He took hold of the handle and managed to turn it a few inches. Then he left hold and stood still, apparently undecided as to whether he should renew the attempt. He did not renew it, but running back to his father, said, "Daddy, there has been such a battle. The evil spirit fought the good spirit. The evil spirit wanted me to let off the water, but the good spirit said that would not be right. The good spirit won, and I have come to tell you of his victory."

When the child once reaches this fourth stage of Simple Deliberation, the progress in the development of his will is rapid. His experience of life each day

becomes more complex. The greater freedom of action, which is now beginning to be his, is widening his knowledge of right and wrong. Actions are no longer grouped by him merely as good or bad ; he begins to recognize different degrees of goodness, different degrees of badness. With his increasing knowledge of right and wrong should be combined, as a result of his training, an increasing desire for the right. He is now more open to understand and to receive impressions from without ; he has a greater power of forming conclusions of his own ; intellect, imagination, and moral purpose, all are growing in him. When, therefore, a difficulty arises, and he is uncertain how to act, the process of deliberation is necessarily more complex, and his final decision is arrived at only after a prolonged period of hesitation. He is called upon, under such circumstances, to exercise, though in a simple way, what we speak of as moral judgment.

This, then, is the fifth and last stage in the development of the will—Deliberation Proper. *The stimulus to action is entirely from within, action is preceded by hesitation and deliberation, and the result is determined by the presence of not merely two, but a number of conflicting ideas, in a complex consciousness.* The will in later life gains in strength and concentration ; the desires of early life become its purposes and ideals. The already complex field of consciousness of a child of six or seven becomes, in manhood and womanhood, still more complex, but the problem of will is the same in outline at seven as at any period in later life, when the up-grown person may deliberate for days, or even weeks, before he decides which is the right course of action to pursue.

Janet, seven years old, had been sent to buy some biscuits ; out of the money given her there was 6½d. in change. On her way home she passed an old woman, selling water-lilies at ½d. each. The temptation was great, and Janet was not strong enough to resist ; she bought one lily. When she got home, she hid the lily

in a corner of her bedroom, and gave her mother the 6d. change. No questions were asked, it would never have occurred to her mother to doubt the child's honesty. But Janet felt increasingly uneasy; she hated the sight of the water-lily; she felt lonely and miserable, but she was afraid to confess. Need she tell this time? She would never do such a thing again, and if she said nothing, no one would ever know. Mother was so pleased with her, she would be sad if she knew. Yet, if Mother knew what she had done, and knew also that she hadn't told, that would be even worse. So the child hesitated between the two courses of silence and confession, and for a while did nothing, until at last she could wait no longer and ran to her mother telling all her trouble.

Now it might be that, confused with the conflict of thought, she suddenly forgot that her mother would never suspect her; fearing only lest her mother should find out, impulsively she made her confession. If so, her action had not been the result of a deliberate exercise of will. But if, on the other hand, she had deliberately put aside any mean and cowardly thoughts, realizing more and more vividly the duty of honesty at all costs, and had, by a sheer effort of her will, acknowledged her wrong-doing; this would have been an example of a highly developed voluntary action. In the former case, Janet would have shown *moral impulse*, in the latter, *moral judgment*.

A second example may help to make clearer this distinction between impulsive and deliberate action. Frances, seven years old, though in most respects a careless little person, exercised much thought in the expenditure of her weekly penny. She was making a scrap album for a Christmas present, and that week, her Saturday penny was to be spent on scraps. From one shop to another she wandered, looking carefully through their stores of scraps, but not feeling sure that she was getting full value for her money at any of them. The afternoon had nearly gone, and the penny was not

yet spent. Frances stood thoughtfully considering, then she deliberately returned to the first of the many places she had visited. In those few moments, she had deliberately weighed up in her mind, as far as she was able, the comparative advantages and disadvantages of the various shops, from the point of view of penny sheets of scraps, and her action in returning to the first had been the result of a definite exercise of judgment and will on her part. Had she suddenly felt an appetite for tea, or wearied of the whole business of marketing, and therefore gone into any shop merely because it was close at hand, her action would have been impulsive.

Such deliberation is no easy matter. It is often hard to judge which course of action is the right one; it is often equally hard, when we know the right, to do it. For grown-up people it is difficult: it is rarely easy for the child, and requires considerable strength of will. Such strength of will is the result of the training given in the first few years of the child's life; he cannot acquire it all at once. It is only as the result of education that his ideas can establish "those strong, stable, well-organized alliances, which will stand (him) in good stead, when the hour comes in which (he) is put to the test, either by a conflict of duties, or by the commoner conflict between a duty and a temptation."<sup>1</sup> In this process of Deliberation Proper, the last stage in the development of the will, the child is then called upon to exercise his moral judgment.

In what does this moral judgment consist? What do we imply when we use the term? We imply that the child, according to his age and experience, knew what was the right thing to do in certain circumstances; that he possessed the faculty of thinking over different alternatives, and of picking out from among those alternatives, the right, or the better, course of action, that he not only *knew* the right, but *desired* the right, and possessed the *power* to follow the right, when recognized as such, with comparative ease. The child

<sup>1</sup> "The Making of Character," MacCunn.

who does the right *impulsively* is a long way behind the one who *deliberately* does the right, in spite of the temptation to do the wrong.

The development of the will depends, then, on the development, separately and in unison, of these four, the desire for right, the knowledge of right, the habit of intelligent right action, and the power of self-mastery. How do they grow? In what way can we influence their growth? How far does freedom of action, and to what extent does obedience to the will of others, serve to strengthen the child's own will power? These questions I shall attempt to answer in the next chapter



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE TRAINING OF THE WILL

1. **Knowledge of Right and Wrong.**—The child's experience of the result of his different actions in the society of which he is a member—The growth of a standard of behaviour—Good *behaviour* and good *conduct*—Ultimate sanction for right or wrong conduct within himself—The voice of Conscience—Contradictoriness of his various experiences—Need for a uniform standard on our part—Avoidance of vague fault-finding

2. **The Growth of Right Desire.**—Right desires grow through use—Influence of an environment which does not "force," but compels by its persuasive power—The unconscious stimulus of example and story—Influence of physical on moral well-being

3. **The Habit of Intelligent Right Action.**—Control exercised from without precedes self-control—The latter learnt partly by means of voluntary, whole-hearted obedience—Insistence on right doing by those in authority develops self-control, only when a greater love of right-doing follows the doing of the right—The difference between "wishing" and "willing"—The child's faith in his own power to do right

4. **The Gaining of Self-mastery.**—The claim of the moral law—The importance of the self-regarding sentiment—Self-mastery acquired by practice—Through the exercise of external authority, gradually lessening as the child learns to care for and to do the right, we teach him to become increasingly his own master

ON those occasions which, now and again, are bound to come to the child, even while in the nursery, when, faced with the temptation to do wrong, he tries to do right, he needs not only to know what is right and to love right sufficiently to strive towards it, but he needs also sufficient power of control over his own impulses to enable him to follow the right, when seen, in spite of the temptation to do otherwise. How is this knowledge and love of goodness, this power of self-control, to be obtained?

## I—KNOWLEDGE OF RIGHT AND WRONG

As, by repeated experiences treasured in the child's memory and afterwards compared and analysed, he gradually gained his knowledge of the material world, so now in this world of his own actions. As he follows thoughtlessly the impulses within him, some of his actions meet with the approval, others, he finds, with the disapproval of those around him. When they approve, he is pleased; when they disapprove, he in some way suffers. He insists upon pushing his toys off the table on to the floor, in spite of repeated orders to the contrary, his toys may be taken from him or his hands slapped; he suffers pain and is probably called "naughty." Nurse comes at bed-time to fetch him for his bath; he, wishing to play a little longer, rebels lustily; kicking and screaming, he is carried to the bath-room, "Naughty boy," in all probability he hears Nurse say, in forcible tones. He takes his brother's engine from him, or dips his foot in the puddles out of doors; again he is probably called "naughty." On the other hand, when some chocolate was given him, and Nurse said, "Give Brother some," and he readily held out the sweet, he heard her say, "Good boy, you are kind." It was dinner-time and his bricks had to go back into the basket; Nurse held the basket out, without a murmur, he put in the bricks; "There's a good boy," she said, when the last one was in. The word "naughty" is applied, then, to one group of his actions, alas! a very large group; "good" to another group. When anyone calls him "naughty," they show their disapproval, their tone is sharp, perhaps they frown, when they say "good," they seem pleased, their tone is softer and their faces smiling. To begin with, as we have already seen, the child had no idea that there was any difference between his actions, that some would be pleasing, others displeasing to those grown-up people around; he simply followed his impulses, because he felt the desire within him, inde-

pendently of results. Now he knows differently, and he modifies his actions accordingly. In some moods, he desires to please, and wants to be what Nurse calls "good"; so he does what she tells him—leaves the coal-scuttle alone at her first reminder, avoids those tempting puddles, and is altogether a "well-behaved" boy. But, at other times, he longs to be "contrary", knowing it to be "naughty," he follows his own inclinations, dawdles behind when out for his walk, starts to run across the road contrary to order, and screams when sat up in the mail-cart. He can distinguish approval from disapproval, and according to his mood, according to whether he feels in or out of touch with the person in authority, he desires to gain the one or the other.

And all the time he is learning, making fresh discoveries. The same degree of approval or disapproval is not accorded, he finds, to all his different actions. Some are good, some "very good," sometimes he specially delights these grown-up people with something which seems to be an act of virtue, generally something which he found it hard to do. Some actions are called "naughty," some "very naughty," some "shocking" or "wicked"; generally a severer punishment waits on these last offences. He is a "good" boy at meals, for instance, if he does not talk too much, sits still and keeps his feeder clean; "naughty" if he does the opposite; but if, out of sheer mischief, he upsets his soup over the table, he is called "very naughty." When he gives up his india-rubber horse to Baby, though it is helping the big cart horse to put the coals in the shed, he is a "very good" boy. It is hard to do it, and Nurse's approval is a comfort to him. Then, the other day, he tore his picture book, his best picture book, which he had himself taken from the shelf, although he knew he was not allowed to do so. Nurse found the torn page, and asked him about it. He tried not to look at her while she waited for his answer, he wanted so badly to say he "didn't know," but somehow he

couldn't, with Nurse looking so kindly at him. Still she waited, and at last, with a big effort, he confessed his fault. Nurse then put her arms around him; "Bravo, Sonnie," he heard her say in such a proud, glad voice, "I am glad you told me. You mustn't do it again, but this time I shall not punish you, for you have told the truth." "Telling the truth"—that, then, is the best action of all. *Gradually he begins to realize that there is a standard by which actions are judged.* We are not at present considering how far the standard of the nursery is identical with the standards of after-life, nor even how far the standard of the nursery has a moral basis. Had the words "untidy," "ill-mannered," "selfish," "disobedient," and their opposites been used instead of the perpetual "naughty" and "good," the foundations of moral judgment could have been laid from the first. We are only here concerned, however, with the fact that, in any case, the child gradually comes to realize that there is a standard by which others judge his actions.

Even while, through his varied experiences—his efforts and his failures to please others and his consciousness of the approval and disapproval he meets with—he forms a scale of conduct—good, better, best, naughty, worse, worst—a new and deeper consciousness of the significance of these gradations dawns within him. Not only are others pleased with him, when he does what he knows he ought to do, but sometimes he is glad within himself, is glad when he does right, even if no one is by to see. Not only are others vexed with him when he does wrong, but he is sometimes sad himself about it, and if no one can find out any other way, he tells of himself, in order that he may receive the forgiveness he longs for. Everything which grown-up people call "good" or "naughty" does not make him feel like this; it only happens sometimes. For instance, he has been told by Nurse that he must put his toys away in the cupboard overnight, otherwise, the next day, he will have to do without them. One night,

when tucked up in bed, he remembers that he has left some soldiers on the floor in the corner. He is sorry—but not because he is conscious of wrong-doing. If he were sure Nurse would not find those soldiers and take them away, he would not mind in the least ! It is only the probable loss of the soldiers which is bothering him. But, another night, he remembers that at tea-time he had told Nurse a “ lie ” While she was out of the room, he had taken a piece of sugar ; somehow she had guessed it and asked him ; and he had said “ No.” She had believed him, and it was all right. He hadn’t troubled about it again, till Nurse had heard his prayers and said “ Good-night.” Then he began to feel “ a horrid pain inside ” and the pain wouldn’t go. At last, he had to call to Nurse and confess ; and then, and not till then, was he able to drop happily to sleep. The child himself could not explain why he should feel differently in the two cases ; yet he is convinced that there is a difference between these two actions. *Some things, he learns, are right or wrong independently of external approval, others right or wrong merely because they are ordered by someone in authority. Some actions constitute mere good behaviour, others are part of good conduct. The ultimate sanction for right or wrong conduct he finds within himself, in his self-approval or disapproval, rather than in the approval or disapproval of others.* This ultimate sanction, of which he is now conscious, indicates the dawn of moral and religious development.

Were it not for this inner sanction, which becomes clearer as he grows stronger and wiser, the child would surely at times be tempted to regard “ goodness ” and “ badness ” as mere conventions dependent upon the will of grown-up people, so indiscriminating often is the praise or blame accorded to him. One day he was having a grand romp after breakfast, Nurse smiled and seemed to share in the fun. An hour later he was making the same noise, and because he didn’t stop the minute he was told, she was very vexed. Baby, it happened, was at that moment dropping to sleep ; he had not realized

the fact ; " good " one minute had apparently become " naughty " the next. Yesterday morning, as Nurse sewed, he pelted her with questions ; she answered them, laughed, and told him " he was a sharp little lad, and in time would be a clever man like his father." To-day when he questioned her, she just said, " Don't bother," and when, in spite of rebuffs, he kept on, she told him to go back to his game and not be " naughty." She was tired after a wakeful night with Baby ; that, he did not know. When his aunt came to see him, he asked her if she had brought him chocolates, she smiled and told him to feel in her pockets and see ; but after she had gone, Nurse had scolded him for being rude ! Apparently it merits more disapproval to fall down on a wet and muddy Sunday than on a wet and muddy Monday : strange though it may seem to the child ! At times, this is all so puzzling. Different people have such different standards by which they judge him ; even the same person does not seem to have the same standard from one day to another. It is a slow process, bringing moral order out of this chaos, and the little child's understanding is weak and limited.

*Even in matters of behaviour, he should not be expected to obey everybody, and those in authority should strive to maintain a uniform standard. Better persistent " spoiling," than discipline one day and an absence of discipline the next. He can adjust himself to a standard which is permanent, not to one that varies. Laws of behaviour, laws of conduct, should be few, unvarying, plain and comprehensive. Vague fault-finding should be avoided. The word " naughty " should be ruled out of our vocabulary : it too often expresses only the effect of the child's action upon ourselves and not the balanced judgment of the action which we should seek to convey to the child. Consequently, to the child, it only means disapproval, and makes no appeal to his moral understanding. If we have to specify the fault, we shall first observe carefully where the failure lies, and occasionally—maybe*

often—we shall find that the failure lies with us, instead of with the child. Only if our own standard of right and wrong is clear and definite, based upon the moral law, can we expect the child to gain the knowledge, which is, after all, the necessary foundation of moral judgment.

## 2. THE GROWTH OF RIGHT DESIRE

It is not enough, however, merely to know what is right, without the desire to do right, the mere knowledge that something is right is insufficient as a motive force to action. How can we cultivate right desires?

The baby lies in his cradle. As we bend over him, he holds out his little arms to love and to be loved. Gladly we respond to his wishes, and whenever we pass the cradle, he comes to look for some caress, which we never fail to give. We satisfy his instinctive longing for affection, and the longing grows.

Bath-time is over, and, warm and comfortable, we lay him down for sleep. He cries and frets, asking for attention. When we go near him to see that he is comfortable and he feels our touch, he is quiet; when we move away, he cries more lustily than before. All he wants is our presence to hush or pet him to sleep. We pay no attention. Night after night the same thing may happen, but his desires meet with no response, and he soon ceases to ask.

In a few years' time, he will no longer care to play with his india-rubber horse, his rattle or his ball; he is fretful and mischievous if no other toys are at hand; he wants to *make* things, not merely to play. Bricks satisfy him; bricks, which can be turned into animals, houses or engines; bricks, which he can pile one on top of the other, until they fall. His desire is right and natural; the old toys are put away; new ones are got. And when the bricks cease to satisfy his creative instincts—wood, hammer and nails; clay, pencil, brush and paper, are given to him. His desire to create

is good ; we try to satisfy him ; and both desire and capacity grow through use.

But the lad is very masterful. When Nurse or Mother offend him, he fights for what he wants ; when he wishes for a toy with which the others are playing, he takes it by force ; he shows a desire to bully, to domineer. This must be diverted. He has to learn to understand and consider others and to acquire self-control. So we fill his life with interests and give him certain responsibilities, we get him animal pets to care for, we interest him in other children less happily placed than himself. In order that he shall feel the joy of serving others, we make him a privileged helper in the home. The desire to share and to help, the capacity to understand and to sympathize were weak to begin with ; through exercise they grow. The hold which his anti-social desires have upon him is lessened as they are discouraged and find little opportunity for exercise.

But, in spite of our encouragement of some, and discouragement of other, tendencies in his nature, the desire for right-doing is still fitful and uncertain, dependent on mood, on physical health, on the urgency of those personal desires which so often clash with higher desires. This is but natural, and the remedy lies in supplementing the child's wayward will by our steadier will.

The children are playing in the nursery. Peggy is tired of her game. "Do play with me a bit, John," she begs. But John is still keenly interested in what he is doing, and does not want to stop. "Come here, dearie," says Mother, "I can put my work aside for a bit and play with you." John hears, he knows his mother is busy. He had a bit of the feeling that he ought to play with Peggy when she first asked him, and when he hears his mother offer to play with her, it makes him wish that he had offered first. "No, Mother, don't you stop, I'll play with her," he says—and glad in his mother's approval, glad in himself for having done the right, for Peggy's sake, he throws himself heartily into



a fresh game. The self-control he saw in his mother made him realize the power of control within himself. Nothing is more readily caught than the spirit of right-doing, when the right is done gladly.

Robert had found it hard to do his share in household duties, he grumbled at going messages and hated tidying up after himself, yet he was an affectionate, responsive little lad. Instead of asking him any longer to do little jobs *for* her, his mother began to ask him to do them *with* her, and found that that was quite a different matter. He helped her make the beds, straighten the rooms, he even dried the dishes. All the while they chatted or sang, asked one another conundrums or told jokes, and the work seemed done in no time. She enjoyed it, consequently he enjoyed it, they were "merry workers together in this merry charming world." Yet, without knowing it, all the while he was getting to *like* to see the rooms tidy, the beds neat, and the dishes washed and dried and laid in nice, even piles. The desire for order was growing, which would make the actual putting into order no longer felt as drudgery. The love of right-doing was being caught from the grown-up person, who herself loved right.

One busy morning, Willie, five years old, asked his mother if he could do something to help. "Yes, indeed," was the ready reply, "top and tail those gooseberries for me." He looked at the gooseberries, and he looked at his mother; then, slowly and hesitatingly, he said: "If you *want* me to, I'll do the gooseberries, but I'd much rather be beside you." Work done beside us is not felt as work. When the children are small, we often forget this fact, and overstrain their desire to help by not giving them the chance of helping "in our good company." We think more of the task that needs to be done than of the child who is going to do it; it is the child who needs our first consideration, until he has learnt to know the joy of service as surely as we know it ourselves.

Some children are born good, most have to grow good under the influence of a "compelling environment"—but continual forcing never inspired anyone with the love of right-doing. Our environment must needs compel by its persuasive power, as the magnet compels the needle. By the constraining influence of love, united to a wise discipline, by the unconscious stimulus of example and story, we gradually modify the children's characters. If our boys are selfish, it is our fault because we have not made them otherwise.

How else is right desire strengthened? By not allowing emotion to run to waste without expressing itself in action. Unless the glow of admiration kindled in the child when he reads tales of bravery and self-sacrifice, when he hears of goodness, or sees goodness in others, is followed by practical acts of well-doing, the consciousness of emotion makes for weakness rather than strength, for sentimentality rather than power. From the first, the children should be taught that what they admire and love they should strive in little things also to become, that their daily endeavour should be in harmony with their evening prayer.

One point more. We are conscious that we ourselves are less capable of moral effort when we are in impaired health; the same impairment occurs in the child. If he is not as well as usual, he is likely to be less responsive; an increase in his physical energy helps towards an increase in his moral energy. Late nights and exciting pleasures will make a naturally responsive little person completely unresponsive; a disordered liver will make him no longer even want to be "good." Fresh air, wholesome food, cold baths, long hours of sleep and freedom from undue excitement count for as much—one is often tempted to say for even more—in the growth of right desire than moral influences and moral training. Desire cannot be considered as something apart from the child himself. The love of virtue is bound up with health: *mens sana in corpore sano*.

## 3. THE HABIT OF INTELLIGENT RIGHT ACTION.

But often, although the child *knows* what is right, and *desires* what is right, his longing to satisfy the wish of the moment is so strong within him that he is powerless to resist it.

At school one day, Neville, six years old, saw some chocolates lying on one of the other boys' desks, he knew that it was stealing to touch them, he wanted to do what was right, but he loved chocolates, and the temptation proved to be too strong for him.

Janet, when she spent the halfpenny on the water-lily, knew that she was doing wrong, and yet she did it. Momentary desires assert themselves with such force that they outweigh other and higher desires.

Dougald, aged seven, was out with his mother. In his pocket was his precious Saturday's penny. As he was discussing with her whether he should spend or save it, he used the expression "I will." Half jokingly, his mother said, "You *will*, will you, laddie? And what do you mean by '*I will*,' I should like to know?" For a moment the little lad pondered, then he said: "When I just *want* something, it's my wish, but my will is what makes me *do* what is right. I have to use my will against my wish." Then, after a pause, he added, "Sometimes the wish sticks to you so close you can hardly use your will."

"You've got two little things inside you, Joan," he was overheard telling his little sister, the next day, when she had been disobedient. "Nurse can see them and I can see them, they're your will and your wish. Now, when you were playing just now, your wish fought against your will and your wish won. Therefore," added the small preacher, "you did not do right, because your will ought to come before your wish."

With unconscious insight the little philosopher had unwittingly put the problem in a nutshell. The "will" must come before the "wish." *How can the child learn*

*to subordinate the impulse of the moment ; to control, if need be, his own desires ?*

Before he can walk, he is carried—before he is able to read, we read to him—so, before he is capable of self-control, we, from without, insist that he shall not yield to every momentary impulse. It cannot be otherwise ; he has as yet neither the power, the knowledge, nor the desire, to control himself. We must teach him control

It annoys Sidney, for instance, to put away his toys when he has finished playing with them ; he wants immediately to begin some other game ; but we insist upon his learning to be tidy. The habit, hard at first, gradually becomes easier ; he learns to obey more readily ; finally, the question of obedience ceases to enter in ; however eager he is to be off for another game, he can make himself first put his things in order.

He finds it difficult to stop in the middle of his imaginary train journey to put on his hat and coat, when the others are ready for their walk. It would be out of the question for Nurse and Baby to wait until he desired a change of occupation ; there is no question about it, he must stop at once. This, too, at first, he finds hard, and Nurse has to insist upon prompt obedience. Gradually it becomes easier, until she has only to put her head in at the door with the words, "Ready, laddie," and, with hardly a thought for the game he is leaving behind, he runs after her. Every hour of every day he is called upon in some small matter to sacrifice his own wishes, not always, it seems to him, reasonably. Many a time he would not yield, unless some compulsion were put upon him. But as time goes on, and the yielding becomes easier, he realizes, if such be the case, that the demands made upon him are both right and reasonable, that they are made for his good.

In these numberless small details of nursery life, prompt and unquestioning obedience has been exacted from him. *Through such soldierly obedience, he has*

*learnt to subordinate his wishes to the will of others. This represents law and order in the only form in which he is as yet capable of grasping it. But such subjection is only for a time. As soon as he begins to understand the law, and to side with it rather than oppose it, self-control is able to take the place of the control once imposed from without.*

But even while we are insisting upon such prompt obedience, we want to do so in such a manner that the child learns *himself to will rightly* and not merely to conquer his own inclinations in obedience to others. How can this be done? He must realize that, even in this matter of unquestioning obedience, we are directing and controlling his will, not overlooking it. He must come increasingly to see that, in yielding to us, he is obeying laws of behaviour and conduct, beyond and above us, which we ourselves obey. We must make him feel that *the only obedience worthy of the name is that of the free man, who chooses to obey because he understands the law.* The forced obedience of the slave, whose business is not to understand, but merely to obey, who dares not disobey from fear of punishment, is unworthy of him.

The child, if he does not yield voluntarily, is at times forced to obey, since the law cannot be overridden; but he must realize that forced obedience is not good and meets with our displeasure. Spontaneous, whole-hearted obedience—*self-control*—is the ideal which, from the first, we set before him.

Mary has just returned from her walk, she refuses to take off her boots. "Now, Mary, one, two, three," we count briskly. She knows what we mean; at "one," she sits down and begins to undo her laces. "Bravo," we say, and mentally give thanks for the numerals! She had yielded quickly, that was good. To yield at all within the time limit would have merited praise, but the quicker, the better. If "three" had been said before Mary began to obey, she would

have had to sit alone in her bedroom for a few minutes to ponder awhile on the desirability of prompt obedience! Delay or arguing over the necessity for changing boots would have been out of place; the habit of rapidly conquering the inclination to start playing, before slippers are on, must be conquered. But even in this small matter, the child has learnt that voluntary obedience is the best.

Nancy was nearly three, she had always been taught not to play close up against the door of the room, she had never asked why. One day, a lady, calling at the house, said to her, in that quick, somewhat agitated way which always tends to rouse a child's curiosity, "Come away from that door, child!" Nancy came away as usual, but with a look of wonderment at the door. The next day she deliberately planted herself beside it, announcing in a determined little voice: "Nancy 'tand by door." "And what does Mother say," said her mother quietly, "when ever Nancy stands there?" "Mother says, 'Tum away,' and Nancy doesn't," was her reply. For a few minutes her mother said nothing, for the mite was not naturally rebellious, and in a minute or two might forget her experiment; but there the child stood. There was no other door to the room, there was no way of teaching her why the command had always been given—so her mother said: "Mother can take Nancy away from the door, but she wants her to come by herself." The little rebel's sole rejoinder was—"And Nancy won't!" "Then Mother must lift her up and put her on a chair." There the mite sat, thinking aloud over her recent experience—"Nancy 'tand by door; Mummy says, No, no, tum away; Nancy not bejent girl, Nancy sit on 'tair"—over and over again, till her little chest heaved and her breath came quickly. At last she understood, she was going to cry with what was probably her first consciousness of having displeased her mother. Quickly her mother's arms were round her. "Nancy may come down

now," she said, " I know she will be Mother's obedient girl." Nancy had had her lesson ; she never again attempted to stand by the door. Later her mother was able to explain the reason

The child would learn much from such an experience. She had failed to obey of her own free will ; she had found that behind the law there was a power which could oblige her to obey, but voluntary obedience brought greater happiness.

Through such prompt and unquestioning, though voluntary, obedience, the child learns, then, to control his personal desires, for the sake of the order and the well-being of the society of which he is a member, for the sake of his own well-being. The power of control gained in some directions helps him to gain control over himself in other directions. When it has become easier to leave his soldiers on the battlefield in order to wash his hands for dinner, it is also easier to let his brother join him in his game, even though he would prefer to play alone. When the children argue about every small order given, and leave toys scattered broadcast, they are more likely also to be quarrelsome. Good desires grow and flourish best in an orderly community.

But all this time, the child has been learning the difference between behaviour and conduct, between those actions which he does because grown-up people wish it, and those actions which he is prompted to do by the higher impulses within him. How is he to gain greater control over his own lower impulses ? How far can obedience help him in this ?

Ronald, when he was about three years old, ceased to desire to be helpful. Before that time, it had been a pleasure to him occasionally to run little messages ; now it had become an effort, he was absorbed in his games and refused to do what he was asked. After trying in various ways to influence him, the helpful actions were finally insisted upon. If he was asked

to run a message and refused, he had to sit up in a chair until willing to go ; consequently, for the sake of returning to the game he had been obliged to leave, he consented to do as he was asked. Frowning he would depart, but once out of the room, out of sight of the occupation which had absorbed him, his ill-feeling left him , and, returning to the nursery with a smile instead of a scowl, he was received with a gracious, "Thank you." Obedience gradually became easier. The joy of service had followed the doing of service, and the love of helping returned.

But we need to remember that games in childhood are intensely absorbing, that it is a big effort to leave them even for a moment—"forcing" can easily be overdone. Over-exercise is not good for a child's moral muscles, so to speak, any more than for his physical muscles. The success of our method depends upon the rightness of our insight.

Maurice and his little sister Ruth were dressing in their mother's bedroom. Ruth was laughing and up to fun, and Mother, without looking, said, in a quick tone, knowing how matters usually stood : " Maurice, don't play with her, get on dressing." It happened that, at that moment, he was not playing. Offended, he answered back rudely. " I am sorry if I made a mistake, Maurice ; I apologize," his mother said ; " but even so, you had no right to speak to me as you did, and you should also apologize to me." But he refused, and persisted that it was not his fault that he had been rude, he shouldn't have been blamed for nothing. Off to morning school he went without an apology, still insisting that he was right ; at dinner-time he held to the same view. He wanted to argue the case, but his mother refused to discuss the matter with him, simply stating again that nothing could excuse him for speaking as he had done ; as she had done what she could to repair her mistake, so he should repair his. Bedtime came and Maurice was unchanged. An hour later, he called his mother. " I



am sorry," he said, "I knew you were right the first thing this morning, but I was stubborn and I couldn't say it. The words somehow stuck in my throat."

Surely it had been well to insist upon that apology. Her insistence had enabled him to gain greater control over himself, the right desire had once more followed the doing of the action.

Before the child can make himself do what is right, we, by our quiet insistence, can often help to make him to do it. Once having done it, he experiences the inward pleasure, which is ever the reward of right-doing, and the next time he is faced with a difficulty, he will conquer more easily.

But we are taking a grave responsibility upon ourselves whenever we attempt to insist upon the doing of a moral action, that is, upon what should be the outward expression of an inward feeling.

Frank and Mary were playing at soldiers, and he, forgetting his superior strength, hurt her and made her cry. His mother, who was watching, said to him: "Say you are sorry, Frank." But he wasn't sorry; to his mind, Mary was a baby to cry. Should she *insist* upon an expression of regret? Ought she, for instance, to send him to his own room, until he was willing to express his sorrow? If so, will he really feel sorry at the end of the time, or perhaps only feel increasingly out of touch with Mary? It is clear that the game will have to stop, unless he is sorry; but is it desirable to insist upon the carrying out of the letter of the law? Perhaps so, perhaps not. If the fact of having to say he is sorry makes him more careful another time, makes him glad in his heart that he has acted towards her like a "gentleman," it is well that he should be called on, even against his inclination, to obey; but if, for the sake of peace, he only expresses a regret he is still far from feeling, surely it is not well.

Henry and May had quarrelled, she had been rude to him, he had spoken rudely back to her. Their

father heard about it and insisted upon his apologizing. The boy's sense of justice was outraged ; he was ready to apologize to her if she had also to apologize to him, but she had begun the quarrel. The justice of the claim, however, did not present itself to the father ; the boy persisted in his refusal and was thrashed. But the punishment only deepened his consciousness of injustice and roused all the pluck and defiance of which he was capable. Repeatedly he was punished, but steadily refused to yield. His father, finally, had to give up the struggle. The boy refused to say that he was sorry when he was not. His father's action only aroused for the time a sense of antagonism between the boy's will and his. Had he succeeded, had the boy yielded, merely from fear, or for the sake of peace, would it have been well ?

"It is a very responsible thing to be 'grown up,' for then we become part of the causation of life." In the insistence on our part on right-doing, much insight is needed. *We only help the child to gain self-control when we enable him, by our insistence, to do that which he is afterwards ready to confess he is glad to have done.*

*If right desires are not there, if right is not recognized as right by the child, our insistence is useless, if not actually harmful.* Desire for right and knowledge of right are needed first.

But if the right desire is there, though obscured for the time ; if the child knows the action to be right, though he cannot make himself confess it ; if "his wish sticks so close to him that he cannot use his will" ; our quiet insistence helps him to become morally stronger. In the conflict between right and wrong, we, by our demands, keep the battle going until the enemy has been defeated. The very fact of winning in the end strengthens the child's right impulses, and the next time, the battle is less severe. When the crisis is over, he has gained in self-control, his will is stronger.

But even at those times when we feel obliged to exercise compulsion, our way of dealing with him must be such that it gives him increasing faith in himself and his own power to do the right, even when it is hard. This is where the harm of constant fault-finding comes in: fault-finding tends inevitably to give a child a poor opinion of himself. If, instead of saying "You are an unkind boy," "You are very disobedient," and so forth, we say, "You *can* be kind, only just for a minute you have forgotten," "You *can* be obedient, and you will be, I know, if you think for a minute," we are helping to build up in the child the sense of self-respect which is absolutely essential if the will is to grow strong. So important is it, from this point of view, that the child should increasingly learn to believe in himself that it would be a good working rule, both in the school and in the home, that, for every fault to which attention has to be drawn, two right-doings should be deliberately noticed! Most children "wish" to do right. the difference between "wishing" and "willing" lies in the fact that "wishing" plans no means by which the end can be reached. Whoever enables a child to say "I can," enables him to say "I will."

#### 4. THE GAINING OF SELF-MASTERY

But as his will-power grows in strength through our very insistence upon right-doing, he gradually gains a juster appreciation of what is right, and why it is right. The sense of inner satisfaction, which follows upon right-doing, helps him consciously to side with the moral law. This inner consciousness of what he knows to be right, which we speak of as his Conscience, takes our place as judge over his actions. His conduct is no longer the outcome of a mere conflict of desires in which the stronger prevails. The standard he has set for himself makes it possible for the feebler desire at times to outweigh the stronger.

"Sometimes," said Lewis, "I feel as if a kind of fight is going on inside me, when I want to do something so badly and my thought about what is right won't let me."

Ernest was eight years old, and Mark was six. The elder had been given two pears. He had not been told to share them with his brother, and his impulse was to slip away by himself to a secluded spot and eat both! He did not know that anyone was looking. He stood with the pears in his hand, his mouth watering with anticipation, gazing at them! At last, with a glad smile on his face, he ran back to Mark and held out to him the larger of the two pears.

It was Sunday tea-time. The cake had been cut unskilfully, and one slice was a good bit bigger than all the rest. One after another, the children helped themselves to cake, each, without comment, leaving the large slice, until only three pieces were left on the plate—two smaller, one large—for Mother and the two youngest children. Humphrey, eight years old, with a longing eye, took a small piece; May, aged seven, took the larger, and the last small piece was left for Mother.

What made Humphrey conquer his selfish impulses and May yield to hers? Both had been brought up to believe that "it was the right thing to be unselfish." May did not yet feel the claim of the moral law, Humphrey did. This claim is only felt when the higher impulses in the child's nature have grown strong and stable; when he has learnt by practice habitually to overcome the lower; when, as the result of his experience, he is only happy when he does what he knows to be right; and response to this claim is again dependent on the strength of those higher impulses. *An act of will is an act of choice. The highest act of choice lies in the triumph of the weaker desire.* This can only take place when strength is added to the weaker desire as the result of the pride in attainment of which the child will be conscious if he wins, and the humility and sense of

shame which he knows will be his if he fails. This consciousness of pride or of shame and humility, is what McDougall refers to as the "self-regarding sentiment." When such a master-sentiment, combined with an ideal of conduct, has attained habitual dominance, the way is paved for the development of moral character in the fullest sense. Self-mastery can only be achieved, when the child desires the right, knows that it is in his power to do the right, and knows also that he would be unhappy if he did wrong.

This power of self-mastery can be won in many and varied ways. For instance, Maurice, aged ten, hated "to be ruled." To be told what to do made him immediately want not to do it! But the right had to be done, and the only way to avoid being told was to do it first. If, of his own free will, he fell into line with the rules at school and at home, such rules would no longer need to be *imposed* upon him. If he could learn to master himself, he would require no other master. For the sake of such independence, he strove for self-control. The word "must" he hated; he learned to understand and put himself on the side of the law.

Ronald gained all-round self-mastery, to a large extent by working hard for a junior scholarship. Naturally passionate and rebellious, impatient in overcoming difficulties, inaccurate and wanting in thoroughness, he was difficult to deal with at home and at school. He lacked self-control, while at the same time he possessed strong impulses, which needed to be kept well in hand. Every day, while he worked for his scholarship, a little bit of careful work had to be done, generally against his will. Subject after subject had to be studied, until each one was brought up to scholarship standard. At first the very regularity of the grind was an effort to him. Gradually he succumbed to that, as part of the inevitable discipline of life, but his heart was not yet in his work. His "wish" tended in one direction, his "will" had to be set in another and ..

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contrary direction. He was like a boy training to win the cup of honour at his school sports, training dutifully, because those interested in him desired him to win, but all the while keen on something else ! But steady faithful work, even against the grain, brings its own reward. He made headway, difficulties vanished as knowledge grew ; subjects became more interesting, and, in spite of himself, he began to care for work. Not only did he learn to become a worker at school, but the self-mastery, gained in the one direction, spread in other directions. That morning hour of work, done in spite of the temptation to play cricket or rounders, strengthened his will, so that he was able to resist other temptations. He became more responsive, less impatient, less quarrelsome, more thorough. His self-mastery was acquired by practice : love of work followed the doing of work ; doing of right in other directions, the doing of right in the one direction.

For most children, goodness is not an end in itself. It is goodness in the concrete, not in the abstract, which inspires them. They desire to be like some one whom they love, and to be some one great when they grow up. With their vivid imaginations, their ideals are so real, that they supply the stimulus towards right-doing which they need.

Jack was twelve years old, and longed to be a soldier. Soldiers were strong, obedient, fearless and truthful. With this end in view, he set himself a high standard of conduct. One day, for a joke, he and some school friends opened the gates in a field and drove all the sheep out on to the road. When their master heard of it, he questioned all the boys in the school. Jack's younger brother, Dick, was asked if he knew anything about it. He did, but as a matter of course—declared he knew nothing. Then Jack was asked, and at once owned up. Dickie stared at him in wonderment, then whispered : " Jack, why did you say ' Yes ' ? " " Why ? because I did do it," answered Jack, " and if I had said ' No,' Daddy would be sorry—he says soldiers never

say 'No' when they have done a wrong thing. When I am a man, I mean to be a soldier."

Donald, too, longed to be a soldier, and only feared lest by the time he grew up—he was eight years old—everybody would be so fond of everybody else that there would be no more fighting! For the sake of his ideal, he would fight with his big brother, and, when he was hurt, pluckily keep back the tears; when he woke after a bad dream, frightened in the night, he would strive not to call out—acts of self-mastery not easy to a child of that age. Such children have an end in view, an ideal of what they want to be; self-mastery is for them worth while.

Not mastery by others, however high the standard which they set, but Self-mastery is the goal at which we should aim. Continued mastery by others is both weakening and harmful. Unless, by our insistence, we are helping the child to control himself, so that, as the years pass, we need to exercise ever a lesser control, we have not trained him rightly, however right his actions done under our direction may be. As he comes to understand the right, to care for the right and to be capable of self-control, we should cease to exercise authority over him.

Our part is to interpret to him the experience of life so that he increasingly understands, to place him in such an environment, to show him such examples, that he increasingly cares; and only to insist, in such matters and in such a way, that he may learn self-control. And all the while our interpretation of life, our temporary insistence on right-doing, our choice of the influences to which he shall be subject, must be based upon a reasoning insight into the special tendencies of his nature, an insight in which he himself should share.

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## CHAPTER IX

### FREEDOM WITHIN THE LAW

Law and liberty—"Freedom is only granted us that obedience may be the more perfect"—Neglect of the demands of the social order results in disorder, waste of energy, time and temper—Personal discipline compared with the discipline of a system—Such systematic discipline becomes unnecessary when good habits have been formed—Demands of the moral order—The right use of liberty depends on the possession of right desires—Need in some cases for the special encouragement of right, and discouragement of wrong, impulses—Our insistence upon right-doing—Insight and uniformity of judgment on our part necessary—The intense longing for freedom felt by some children—Freedom within the law, bondage only when the law is ignored—"Nagging" and ineffective repetition of commands—The "lust of power"—Rule and misrule—Freedom essential to growth

UNCONVENTIONAL, in many ways, as are the methods of life and teaching in a large school in the South of England, Sundays there are especially unconventional ! To the older children, they are indeed holidays—holy days For the greater part of the day, their time is their own. In groups, they wander off on long country rambles, some exploring the country round, some in search of botanical or geological specimens, some "bug-hunting." Others take photographs, a few spend the greater part of the day with their pets, some revel in books—but all are free ; all, as far as one can see, earnest and happy. As they follow their natural bent in the matter of occupation, so in the matter of dress. Flannel shirts and loose open collars are worn, not the Sunday clothes which betoken, to most boys, at any rate, the conventions and restrictions bound up with our English idea of Sunday. There is a certain sense of peace which makes it seem like Sunday to them—peace, in the quiet happiness felt by each child in following his



chosen occupation. The gladness of freedom, for the most part cheerfully and wisely used, finds a fitting conclusion in the Evening Service.

Such Sundays may be a mistake, or they may be specially calculated to inspire those children with a reverent and religious spirit. According to our special upbringing, according to our individual religious opinions, difference of opinion will exist. But, whether desirable or undesirable, as a method of spending the Sunday, the fact that a day can be so spent in any social community shows us the value of discipline, discipline which prepares the way for perfect liberty. Discipline there must be in the school life—Sundays and weekdays alike—for the sake of the well-being of the community—for the sake of the well-being of each individual child. The wisely used freedom of Sunday could only become possible as the result of faithful adherence to school discipline, in all its details, throughout the week. But, neither during the week, nor on those precious Sundays, are the children conscious of the discipline as a burden, they obey spontaneously and without effort.

In the ideal home, always, year in, year out, each child should, as he grows, feel free to develop happily upon his own lines. He is a member of a family, just as at school he is a member of the school community; such membership entails obligations upon him, but it showers benefits. The inspiring clash of opinions that follows from mutual respect, mutual helpfulness, mutual sympathy—should be combined with individual freedom for self-development. But such freedom must be earned through discipline. "Liberty must be limited in order to be possessed" What lessons must be learned ere the child is ready for this precious, and indeed needful, liberty? How are such lessons best taught?

"I wish that some day nobody would interfere with me; just for that one day, it would be lovely if I could do just whatever I liked from morning till night,"

murmured Eric, one morning before getting up. "You shall have a free day whenever you like to ask for it, and you shall see how you like it," his mother replied, for Eric was nine years old, and no serious harm could have come to him. "Shall I give the others freedom to do what *they* like at the same time?" Great was his agitation. "Oh no, if nobody keeps them in order, I shall be miserable!" Even Eric realized that liberty for *all* must mean law for *all*. Everyone unpunctual for meals, everyone getting up when they chose, everyone leaving toys about when they had finished with them, everyone free to do what they chose regardless of other persons' feelings, was out of the question. Without some general recognition of the demands of the *social* order of the home, liberty would lead to chaos; without some general recognition of the demands of the *moral* order of the home, each doing unto others, to some extent, that which they would that others should do unto them, liberty would degenerate into licence, and result in unhappiness all round. The more these social and moral obligations are recognized and instinctively followed, the greater the freedom which the children are able to enjoy.

#### DEMANDS OF THE SOCIAL ORDER

In discussing the manner in which we train the children to recognize the necessity of, and to follow, the law, we need to draw a distinction between the demands of the social order—those things which it is right to do for the sake of the smooth working of the home life; and the demands of the moral order—those things which are right in themselves. There is nothing *morally* wrong in not changing one's boots when returning from a walk, in sitting down to dinner with dirty hands, in fidgeting at table, in leaving coat and cap lying about in the hall. But such offences against order, neatness, punctuality or good manners are extremely inconvenient, if they become habitual; and they lead to chaos, ill-temper,

weariness and nagging. The children may enjoy their freedom unchecked ; but it is at the cost of slavery and worry on the part of other people ; and this is not right. Moreover, even the children themselves suffer from their own slackness. It is a truism that orderly habits mean an orderly mind. The amount of time which is wasted in the course of twelve months, in looking for missing gloves, caps and books ; the amount of money which is wasted in toys, broken, because they have not been taken care of ; the amount of temper and energy, which is wasted in looking for things which should never have been lost, in making up for time lost through dawdling—is beyond calculation.

Mr. Paton, in a lecture on school discipline, told how “ some thirty years ago, the sand bar at the mouth of the Mississippi had so increased, that large and heavily loaded ships had to wait days, and sometimes weeks, before they could get out to sea. Millions of dollars were wasted in dredging : the biggest river in the world was more than a match for the dredgers. At last, an engineer came forward, who undertook to uncork the mouth of the river and keep it open. His plan was ingenious. He had noticed that where the river was narrow, the current was strong—so strong that it swirled all the mud through instead of depositing it. Accordingly, he saw that, if he narrowed the channel of the exit, the force of the stream would be so increased as to carry out, with training walls, the sand and silt and mud into the deep sea : the bar, once cleared, would never form again. And it was so.”

So, in the home, without the training walls of discipline in these minor matters, effort is wasted, and energy is dissipated, which would otherwise have found for itself a channel in fruitful directions. In a home in which there is no such discipline, there is constant friction, and a constant blocking of the path of satisfactory work, through the amount of time necessarily given to undoing the effect of other people's inattention.

to the details of social order. How can such friction and waste be avoided, and discipline be attained? Does the effort to enforce discipline in itself introduce fresh elements of friction, in the place of those which were there before?

Not if the discipline is wisely, consistently and mechanically imposed; and this is where the home so often fails, it does not go to work systematically. Instead of laying down certain laws, fixing certain penalties, and mechanically and unfailingly exacting them; we constantly remind the children, punish sometimes, and, at other times, exempt from punishment—with the result that, when we do punish, the children think themselves hardly and unfairly treated, and when we exempt from punishment, they cease to make any effort. "So long as a boy knows," writes Mr. Paton, "that a certain offence brings a certain penalty, he does not feel himself spited; he no more resents being kept in by the master than being kept in by the weather. Only punishment must be certain. If there is a chance of escape, even at the longest odds, a boy will risk it. He won't be deterred from whispering in class by the *possible* risk of a thousand lines, but he will by the *certainly* of thirty. Your English boy is a sportsman, if you give him a chance for sportsmanship."

The "Human Boy" is the same at home as at school; and in this respect, the girl does not differ widely from the boy. Only, generally speaking, her offences against the social order are less aggressive than his, and our spasmodic efforts to improve her in this respect are taken more good-temperedly.

It is trying, of course, to have to get up when one is called, to have to clear away one occupation before starting on another—but if disagreeable things have to be done, the sooner they become automatic the better.

Some children are naturally tidy and methodical; they require little, if any, training. But with others,

it is a wholly different matter. Constant reminders are necessary, but are often regarded only as a nuisance. Often we forget to remind, and, for the sake of peace, we often do for the child what he should have done for himself. We argue with him over things about which there should be no question, and, all the time, we only increase for him the difficulty of habitual right-doing.

"John," says his mother, "why have you come to table without washing your hands?"

"I *did* wash them," John replies.

"You can't have washed them properly, look at them."

"How do you know I didn't wash them?" he continues; "you weren't there to see! I put them under the tap."

"Well, it's not nice to eat your food with hands like that."

"My food goes into my own mouth, doesn't it? and I don't mind."

"Well, then, *I* do; I don't like to see hands like that at the table."

"Turn the other way then and don't look," is John's final rejoinder.

"John," replies his mother, in a pained voice, "how *can* you argue with me like that?"

"I didn't begin to argue," breaks in the hardened young sinner, "*you* did!"

This kind of argument, in which the child generally gets the best of it, for he does not care what he says, frequently goes on in many homes, and over matters about which there should be no discussion. What is the gain in replying to such questions as: "Why should I brush my hair?" or "What's the good of leaving the room tidy?" or "Why need I wash my hands?" The child, who asks them, is not seeking for information; if he chose, he could answer his questions for himself; he is merely trying to argue himself out of doing what he has been told to do. Yet how often we are weak enough, short-sighted

enough, to reply ! Professor Sully<sup>1</sup> tells the story of a little girl of three and a half who was told not to talk at dinner-time when some visitors were present. " Why me no talk ? Papa talks." " Yes," was the reply, " but Papa is grown-up, and you are only a little girl, you can't do just like grown-up people ! " She was silent for some time, but when her mother told her, ten minutes later, to sit nicely with her hands in her lap like her cousins, she replied, with a humorous smile : " Me tan't sit like grown-up people, me is only a little girl ! "

Some things must be done, simply because we say so ; we say so for the general good of the home ; for, without order, liberty is chaos. Energy, time and temper is wasted, unless the doing of these things becomes habitual.

Two children had to go to school each morning by train, which necessitated a prompt and early breakfast. But, in the winter mornings, they found it hard to get up, only went to their bath after repeated reminders, leaving barely enough time to wash and dress. Dressing was hurried over, breakfast was hurried over—the whole household seemed to be occupied, each morning, in hastening the children through their meal, finding caps, coats and books, and finally bustling them off just in time for the train. *Time* had been lost at the starting of the day ; as a result, *tempers* were lost later. After some time, it occurred to the children's parents that some way ought to be found to avoid this unsatisfactory state of affairs. Rules were then put up in the children's rooms to the effect that they must rise directly they were called, leave bedrooms tidy, put on boots before breakfast, be ready for breakfast at the right time, hang up coats, caps, school-bags, etc. on the pegs overnight, and so forth ; and personal reminders were no longer given. Any omission resulted in a bad mark ; and two bad marks in any one day meant fifteen minutes earlier to bed that night. The

<sup>1</sup> " Studies from Childhood."

enforcement of the rules worked a miraculous change. Children, who are not amenable to *personal* discipline will, as Mr. Paton says, submit willingly to the discipline of a *system*. Bad marks were given good-temperedly and mechanically, and for the most part received in the same way.

The remedy sounds simple enough. But it is difficult, in a busy home, to apply it systematically. We get slack in noting whether slippers are put away or night-clothes folded up; and the children follow suit. The success of the method depends on the certainty with which failure is noted, and the penalty exacted; the latter can be almost insignificant as long as it is certain.

If there is sufficient need in the home for this kind of training (some children are so much less trouble than others!) we shall gradually find ways of helping the children to succeed, and of helping ourselves to be methodical. Some children break rules so much oftener than others, without meaning to be disobedient, simply because they never give themselves time to stop and think; and unless they deliberately think, they do not remember the rule.

Martin, for instance, is keenly interested in a new steam-engine—he does not stop to remember that the dining-room is not the place to work it in; at school, he puts out his foot to trip up another boy as he passes, and only remembers directly *after* he has put his thought into action, that such things must not be, he tosses off his coat and cap, and is away up to the playroom for a game, before it ever enters his mind to change his boots. *A thought*, in Martin's case, *too quickly realizes itself in action*, so quickly that the contrary, and controlling, thought has no time to enter in and serve as a check. Can we do anything in such a case to help him to gain control, and so avoid the constant petty penalties which he would otherwise incur, and which, if frequent, are non-remedial, and even positively harmful? Anything which could impress the law more deeply

on his consciousness, without at the same time boring or annoying him, this is what he needs.

Martin's rules were posted up by the side of his bed, for he was one of those who preferred system to personal rule. Each night his mother went through the rules with him. Great fun they had over the performance, by making the whole thing as real as possible ! "Hullo," his mother would say, "a shout is heard in the garden ! Here's Martin home from school ! In he comes, helter-skelter, he has bought a new top and wants to try it in the playroom before tea ! Off with his coat and cap, and up the stairs——" pause—"What has he forgotten ?" Martin, with his eyes full of fun : "He never hung up his coat and cap, and he didn't take off his boots." "Back he runs then," goes on Mother, "boots don't take long after all ; up the stairs, two at a time, into the playroom ! What a ripping top ! How it spins ! Dong—dong—dong, goes the gong for tea. But Martin hardly attends to the sound—doesn't the top spin for a long time on end ! All of a sudden he remembers !—what ?" A pause again, and Martin breaks in, quoting another rule : "Stop whatever you are doing, when the gong rings for meals !" And so, each night, Martin and his mother run through the short list of those things which *must* be remembered at home and at school ; and if he had forgotten any rule through the day, he wrote out the rule carefully four times to impress it the better on his memory. A difference was quickly made ; Martin was unconsciously, not deliberately, disobedient ; he always *forgot* ; but gradually these few things became so embedded, as it were, in his brain, that directly he began to do something which was forbidden, a thought-message was sent swiftly down, which served as a check.

It helps the mechanical nature of a system of this kind, if we let the children go through the rules at a certain fixed time each day, and themselves tell us which they have broken. Each careful reading through



serves to impress them on the memory : it is more pleasant for the children to confess that they have left their slippers about, than to be *told* that they had done so ; it is easier for the children to realize thus the impersonal nature of the penalty to be paid.

Rules of this kind are useless, unless some grown-up person is able to see that they are kept, and kept *without friction* ; but if they can be adhered to, they are a help to the children in the building up of good habits, just as a scaffolding helps in the building of a house. They avoid the constant repeating on our part of the same directions, the constant forcing of the child to recognize the authority of grown-up persons. When the habits are formed, the rules become needless, for, in the home, occasional forgetfulness is not an important matter. After a child is twelve years old, rules in the home should be unnecessary.

Such a system of discipline, wisely and good-temperedly carried out, is good training both for those who enforce the rules, and for those who obey them. Those who enforce them are themselves trained in orderliness, and in the capacity of looking ahead, so that they can see what rules are necessary to bring about the formation of right habits, and to prevent offences. They must see to it that their discipline is so regular and essential, as not to be too evident ; it should be " one of the things we take for granted, so fundamental that it is out of sight."

#### DEMANDS OF THE MORAL ORDER

So much for the need and the method of training in the recognition of the social order in the home. But the possibility of liberty depends even more upon the child's recognition of the moral law, upon the child's spontaneous desires being of the right kind. Training in desire is the fundamental issue when dealing with the question of the training of character.

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Some children are, as Professor James has aptly put it, "once-born." From earliest childhood, their impulses are good; they may fail in minor matters, but they never seem to want to do anything morally wrong. For such children, but little training is necessary, daily life affords countless opportunities for the strengthening of the good impulses, which they possess as a birthright.

But many children are among the "twice-born"; their natures are an unresolved complex of good and bad impulses. The chances of the day often afford equal opportunities for the development of the good, and of the bad side of their characters, or perhaps even draw out the bad rather than the good. In the case of such children, if we want to make sure that the right finally triumphs, we need to provide special opportunities for encouraging their good desires; we need to persist in encouraging the doing of right actions apart from impulse, trusting that the pleasure in right-doing will follow; we need to discourage the exhibition of the bad impulse, for failure to do right is often more than mere failure at the time, it may by force of habit result in an actual strengthening of the wrong impulse.

Ronald was a strong-willed lad from birth. Impressionable and responsive in certain directions, while he was small he never consciously yielded his own will to that of others, without a preliminary outburst of fierce and exhausting passion—passion which he feared for himself, and yet which he found it hard to control. "Don't let me be naughty again, Mother," he used to say, after one of these terrible storms, leaving him pale and trembling; "I don't like to feel like this." This tendency to passion increased in intensity after he was two years old, and at the same time, he gradually became increasingly selfish. On one occasion, he had had two penny boxes of dominoes given to him on the same day. When his mother was out, she met a little blind girl whom Ronald knew, who wanted a box; but it was "early closing day," the shops in the village

were all shut. Dominoes were this child's favourite toy, and her elder sister had therefore gone to see if she could find a toy shop open anywhere near. Ronald's mother, naturally enough, said that, if she could not get one, she was sure Ronald would be glad to give her one of his. In about an hour, the dominoes were called for ; but Ronald had not been able to make up his mind to give one away. Finally, for the child's sake, his mother insisted on the box being given, whether he wanted to or no. Against the grain, the good action was done ; but the next day, the little lad told his mother how glad he was, and rejoiced in the thought of the blind child's happiness.

After he was three, the desire to be helpful in little ways waned also, and he only learnt the joy of running messages though the actual doing.<sup>1</sup> Persistently he refused to help, and sat in a chair, crying, till he was ready to do what he was asked. When his services were finally given, even though unwillingly and often ungraciously, he was rewarded with thanks, and gradually he began to experience the joy of service and, for the most part, gladly to help.

When the impulse to help, when the desire to share, is wanting in strength, we must be careful not to make undue demands. The child, whose limbs are weak, is not encouraged to go for long walks and so overtax his strength : we strengthen the limbs by massage, give rest as well as exercise, till gradually they become normal. So with the child whose good impulses are weak : we strengthen them by special care, we do not overtax them by demanding what it would be hard to expect, and gradually, as the good impulses grow stronger, we are able to expect, and it is well to expect, a higher standard of conduct. Such a child needs all the love and sympathy which we can shower upon him. "The secret of help is encouragement" We should make him feel so increasingly in touch with those around him in the home, that the sense of harmony with them

<sup>1</sup> cf p 125

should be his strongest spur to right action. Right desires will then be increasingly followed, because he finds his greatest joy when he shares in the communal life: when he exercises his anti-social impulses, he loses this joy.

An older boy had behaved rudely in the kitchen, and his mother, hearing of it, said that he ought to beg the cook's pardon. He felt that he could not do it; some boys find it very hard to own up when they have been in the wrong, especially to those whom they choose to regard as their inferiors. His mother and he talked the matter over, but she did not insist, as an apology to be worth anything must be honest. However, she felt sorry that her son could not act in what seemed to her a manly way; and her face showed it. The boy could not feel comfortable, when his mother looked so, yet he would do nothing merely under compulsion. A struggle went on in his mind. Spurred on by a desire to be in touch with one whom he loved, right conquered, and he made himself apologize.

In this process of the gradual replacing of wrong by right desires, we can do much to help by being uniform in our encouragement. The child does not always feel good desires on suitable occasions, nor express them in the right way, and we are apt then to discourage because we do not understand.

The desire to help is good, yet how often, because we know we can get on more quickly without than with the child's help, we brusquely reject it, as if the child were a bother. Professor Sully refers to an American work in which the writer describes the remorse of a father who, after his child's death, recalled the little fellow's first crude endeavour to help him by bringing fuel, an endeavour which he had met with something like a rebuff.

The desire to be independent is good; yet, in practical life, how trying is the child who, in her independence, goes on her own account to wash herself, and wets all her clothes in the process. It requires

considerable self-control so to act that, in spite of our criticism on occasions, the child realizes our respect for, and sympathy with, her independent spirit.

The child's desire to learn, to inquire into and investigate every new thing, is good in itself: in the practical details of daily life, we often check natural curiosity, as if it were mere meddlesomeness.

The readiness to be outspoken is good: yet frequently, in a manner which must be indeed puzzling to the simple nature of the child, frankness of speech is termed "bad manners."

Ellis had had a steamboat given to him on Friday night; and none of the other children had seen it. Ellis was therefore given permission to show how it worked for a few minutes after Saturday dinner. Six children crowded round the bath resulted in an accident! The boat was upset, the paraffin spilt, and the cleaning of that bath after five minutes of the steamboat was a somewhat lengthy process! It was difficult not to blame the children, but nothing wrong had been done. We must be discerning in our judgments, and only treat with disapproval the expression of wrong *desires*, not accidents, which happen so often even to the most careful grown-up person!

But in the consideration of the question of desire, we have so far left out of account the Self which desires. Some children would choose freedom above all else; they would rather do wrong on their own initiative and suffer afterwards, than do right in obedience to the will of others and enjoy the good fruits of their virtuous acts.

"Why can't I have my own way when I like it so much?" one little lass of five asked pathetically.

Another strong-willed mite of four was checked for drawing on the blackboard with her left hand. "It's my own," she said. "Yes," replied her nurse, "I know it's your own hand, but it's the wrong *way*." "It's my own way, I mean," the child replied, "and I

want to do things my own way. I like my own way better than anything else."

"And I'm glad I *did* disobey," was the honest expression of opinion of a boy of five.

Freedom is what they want, freedom to do right or to do wrong, as the case may be.

Such children must learn that it is wrong-doing which is invariably checked; that in right-doing, and only in right-doing, is to be found the freedom for which they long. When once they voluntarily put themselves on the side of the law, they should be but rarely made conscious of restriction: *freedom* within the law: *bondage*, only when the law is ignored.

But this deliberate choice of right-doing, for the sake of liberty, implies a greater power of reasoning than the child will possess for some years. If, during all these years before he understands, the law is so imposed that he is in a constant state of irritation or rebellion, the process of falling in with it later, when he is capable of grasping the situation, is made extremely difficult: if not impossible. Before *he* can understand, *we* must understand. We must see that the commands which must be given are made as invariable as possible, in order that the child, through realizing their inevitableness, may adjust himself to them, as he does to the Laws of Nature; and as clear and definite as possible, in order that he may learn the difference between right and wrong. We must avoid "nagging" and ineffective repetition of our commands, which only irritate him by making him conscious of the constant interference of other wills with his own. Repetition on our part results in inattention on his, whereas his prompt attention to a command helps him to adjust his actions in accordance with it.

Both mother and nurse constantly failed to prevent "scenes" in the daily management of one small lad of seven. Self-willed, hysterical, rebellious and dreamy as he was, every small event in the routine of nursery life was the cause of difficulties. "Maurice," Nurse

would say, "stop your game now and put on your boots." Maurice heard; but all he said was: "In a minute"; and went on with his game. "No, now, dear," Nurse would say, "put them on at once." "Don't bother, I only want to finish this." But he forgot, and was again reminded, and this last reminder he only felt to be a still greater interference with his game. Finally, Nurse spoke sharply, and then Maurice was furious—furious at having to put on his boots at all, furious at the stoppage of the game and at Nurse's vexation. It was always the same: everything he had to be told repeatedly, from the time of getting up in the morning till going to bed at night. At last, an idea occurred to those baffled grown-ups in charge! One day, Master Maurice was informed that he would be told nothing a second time, that if he did not pay attention at once, someone would help him to do, or do for him, that which he had been told to do for himself, but—he would have a bad mark, and two bad marks meant a quarter of an hour earlier to bed at night! The first day, so strong was his habit of inattention, he could hardly adjust himself to the new state of things. When told to put on his boots, he continued his game as usual; then, with a smile, Nurse brought his boots to him and helped him to put them on. She helped him to tidy up his playthings, when he did not do it at once. Life seemed very smooth for him that day; but, at night, he had a considerably longer time than usual in bed, which he did not by any means appreciate! Even that *one* long night made a difference in his behaviour. In a short time, Maurice was largely cured of inattention and rebellion, and became more anxious to listen to, and side with, the dictates of the law.

But it is not only ineffective repetition which weakens and irritates the strong-willed child, it is our "lust" of power, which we often all unconsciously disclose to him, and against which he instinctively, and rightly, rebels. "How *dare* you disobey me?" we say to the

child, forgetting that surely his "daring," his fearless attitude towards ourselves, who are so much stronger and bigger than he, is one of the finest things about him. When the grown-up person declares to the child, "You have never mastered me *yet*, and you never *shall*"—is it not enough to arouse in him the desire to prove the assertion wrong? Have we half the pluck in the face of overwhelming difficulties which the child has? Have we cause for pride if we do master him?

"I see that some people have got to rule over children," said a philosopher of seven years, "but they needn't shout, they can tell you things in a happy way, with a smile and a happy voice!"

The child's objection is not to *rule*, but to *misrule*; not to *all* rulers, but to particular rulers who do not know how to rule, or who have no right, in his opinion, to rule over him. Some grown-up persons have a way of ordering that things shall not be done, in such a way as to make the mischievous, high-spirited child long to do them. The boy stands talking, after tea, with his fingers, probably not over-clean, on the back of the polished chair. "James, *do* take your hands off the back of that chair, you *do* mark them so," says the agitated housewife; and Jim, doubtless a hardened sinner, follows his impulses by rubbing his fingers (or pretending to!) along chair after chair, wickedly revelling in the agitation he is producing. A quiet "Hands off, old chap," would in all probability have had the desired effect; the demon of mischief would have slept on undisturbed.<sup>1</sup>

The lawgivers should be as few, and as capable, as can be; the laws should be few and necessary; and the child should understand who and what they are. Commands should be as impersonal as possible. Many children can obey a bell, when it calls them to breakfast, more easily than the sound of the human voice, with which it is in their power to argue. There is no

<sup>1</sup> cf. p. 28,



arguing with a written rule. If law is only systematically carried out, the child is capable of realizing it, not so much as the interference of other wills, as social and moral order ; and, after all, he knows that order is one of the conditions of his security and happiness.

But let such strong-willed children enjoy, from the first, the maximum of freedom to use their own wills in rightful channels ; by some means or other, let there be the minimum of " forcing " of our will upon theirs. Every occasion of opposition only increases the child's sense of antagonism, and makes yielding harder the next time. But to avoid compulsion must not be taken to mean weakness on our part. The child is helped to submit voluntarily, by the fact that he realizes that we have the power to insist in the last resort, and that we shall not shirk the task. Strong himself, he respects strength in his rulers. Such power must be used *respectfully* : it must not be flaunted before him, as something before which he ought to bow.

" Informed at the outset by a fine moral feeling," writes Professor Sully, " and a practical tact as to what ought to be expected, the wise mother is concerned before everything to make her laws appear as much a matter of course as the daily sequences of the home life, as unquestionable axioms of behaviour ; and this not by a foolish vehemence of inculcation, but by a quiet, skilful inweaving of them into the order of the child's world. To expect the right thing as though the wrong were an impossibility, rather than to be always pointing out the wrong thing and threatening consequences ; to make all her words and all her own actions support this view of the inevitableness of the law ; to meet any indications of a disobedient spirit, first with misunderstanding and later with amazement ; this is surely the first and fundamental matter. The quiet daily insistence of the wise rule of the nursery proceeds by setting up and maintaining the idea of

dutiful actions and so excluding the thought of disobedient actions."

This comes first ; and by right suggestions, given in the right way and at the right time, much can be accomplished. But, in dealing with complex natures, more is needed. Response is not always to be obtained; the child deliberately wills, on occasions, to be disobedient ; he wills, for the sake of willing, to do the opposite of what is expected. Right-doing must be insisted upon, when necessary ; wrong-doing must always be found unpleasant.

As the child grows older, he must increasingly act rightly, independently of suggestions ; the habit of right-doing must be formed, even though, at times, against the grain. And this must be accomplished in such a way that the child, growing in obedience to law, becomes at the same time increasingly *conscious of freedom*. His obedience is to be a voluntary, whole-hearted obedience ; the obedience of the free-man, not the slave ; the willing obedience of the gospel replacing, as early as may be, the bondage to the law. " You are not the shepherd of sheep," writes Mr. Paton in an address to teachers, " you are rulers of men. Your discipline is a failure if it depends on you alone : it is a success, if it is broad, based upon your subjects' *willing co-operation*." His words apply equally to all who are in any way responsible for the training of children.

" If you left me free for a whole day and never told me what I ought or ought not to do, I think, after all, I should try and do just the same as if you were telling me "—so said a lad of nine years, trained in the spirit of Mr. Paton's words. His mother's " ought " had become his " will."

High ideals have been laid down in this chapter—a high ideal of law as imposed by us on the children, a high ideal of the capacity of the children to respond to laws thus imposed. But it is good that we should

do our outmost to realize our ideal in everyday life, even though we know, all the time, that, in detail, we shall often fall short of it.

If it must needs be that we fail to live up to our standard of enlightened government—it is better to fail on the side of freedom than of discipline ; of love without wisdom, than of wisdom (could it be wisdom ?) without love. The enjoyment of freedom is even more necessary to the development of character in right desires than the development of desire in right direction is necessary for the right use of freedom.

Children, who are made to do the right, without learning to love the right, often blunder irretrievably, when left to follow their own bent. Goodness has been made unlovely, because it was unduly forced upon them, and they found no joy in the doing of it.

Children, who have been over-trained in "moral docility," may continue to be led too easily, and perhaps led in wrong directions, when they leave the sheltered walls of home. *Until we give them freedom, to do good or ill, according to their desire, we are ignorant of the tendencies of their nature.* If those tendencies are good, they will develop when the children are free to use them spontaneously. If they are bad, it is surely a vital necessity that they should show themselves early, while there is yet time to correct them.

Freedom which is to some extent abused, is better than over-protection : without the knowledge of good and evil, without freedom to fall and to rise again, men cannot grow like unto the Gods.

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## CHAPTER X

### CHILDISH CURIOSITY

Curiosity, an appetite for knowledge and fresh experiences, the stimulus which fits the child for freedom—Should the child's curiosity invariably be satisfied?—Sometimes inadvisable—Why?—Healthy and morbid curiosity—Influence of a full and vigorous life—Facts concerning painful illness, death and crime—Sex questions—Necessity for telling the child the truth, before he "picks up" knowledge from outside sources—Spiritual truth underlying physical facts—Love at the heart of the universe—Father Christmas and Santa Claus—Belief in fairies.

A BABY lies in his cradle in the nursery, playing with his rattle. First, his fingers explore its surface; then he puts it to his mouth. One tiny hand begins to play with the other, fingers intertwining with fingers. Mother bends over the cradle, and, with a smile of pleasure, the little hands stretch up to play with Mother's face, with Mother's hair. The baby is absorbed. He is happy and interested.

Later on in the day, when he has had his bath, and lies on his mother's lap by the fire, he stretches out his little limbs to enjoy the blaze, cooing with pleasure as he watches the moving light. He tries to put those toes, so rosy in the firelight, into his mouth. He pulls at his mother's apron; that too goes to his mouth. How strange! His experience is different when he sucks the *foot* and when he sucks the apron! He felt a sensation in his toe, as well as in his mouth, the first time; a sensation in his mouth only, the second time<sup>1</sup> What does it mean?

So, from day to day, fresh and interesting experiences crowd in upon him. There is always something new

<sup>1</sup> cf p. 35.

to watch, to hear, to taste, to feel. The baby has much to learn: all is unknown. In fact, we are said to learn more in the first twelve *months* than in any period of twelve *years* later on.

But the baby has a relish for new experiences, they are a delight to him. He is full of curiosity.

Curiosity, in psychological language, is this very relish, this appetite for new experiences, which "produces in consciousness a concentration of activity, called Attention, and a feeling accompanying this, called Interest."

Without curiosity, the baby would never learn. Because he is naturally curious, he learns to distinguish between his own body and other objects around him, between his mother, his nurse and other people. He learns the direction of sound, and the distance of objects away from him. These are things which he *needs* to learn, they prepare him for an active life. Before he possesses the power to walk or crawl, he needs to gain the knowledge which he will then require for his own self-protection. *Curiosity is the stimulus which impels him to prepare for freedom* The greater the possibilities of freedom, the more urgent is the need for curiosity.

This impulse to investigate what is new, simply because it *is* new—is then good in itself. If we invariably, or even generally, waited to acquire our knowledge, until we actually needed that knowledge, we should miss numberless opportunities. *Every* new experience, *every* fresh stimulus, arouses curiosity at the beginning of a child's life; the stronger the stimulus, the greater the curiosity—but all is full of interest—everything which can be enquired into. This instinctive curiosity to dive into the unknown is good in itself.

Yet there are practical difficulties in the way of a child's unlimited desire to know. Although we recognize search for knowledge as a good thing, yet, in experience, we hesitate to satisfy the children in

certain directions. We hesitate, for instance, to tell them all that they may wish to know with regard to the wages which are paid to servants in the house, details of our own income and expenditure, facts concerning crime and illness, birth and death.

Why do we hesitate? Why do we feel curiosity to be good in some directions and bad in others, and does our judgment justify our instinctive hesitation?

Sometimes it undoubtedly does. The right of private property holds with regard to information about people's own concerns equally with their own belongings. If they make no secret of their age, if they are willing that anyone should know the money they receive, the contents of their parcels and letters, well and good. But we judge, and judge rightly, that if we always satisfy the children's curiosity, when publicity is possible, an unnatural curiosity, in itself objectionable, is inevitably aroused, whenever we deem privacy to be desirable.

This is not, however, the sole reason for keeping from the children the facts of wages, price of gifts, etc. A larger issue is at stake in these matters. The child, who is anxious to know the money value of his presents, discloses a tendency to estimate the value and importance of his gifts by their price. He forms an exaggerated idea of the importance and meaning of money at an early age. The child, who is unduly inquisitive about wages, shows a tendency to forget the more important fact that the value of the services rendered by our servants cannot be estimated by the wages paid. The worth to the receiver of a present should depend on the thought expended on it by the giver—the love, the sacrifice, which it entailed; just as the widow's mite counted for more than all the money spared by the rich out of their plenty. Services which are faithfully rendered cannot be adequately measured and paid for by any amount of mere money. Care for the different members of the family and a high sense of duty prompt such services; gratitude,

and a corresponding sense of what we owe in return, reward them. Money is necessary in our present civilization ; but it is nothing but a medium of exchange, it can never be a measure of the value of a gift, nor of services gladly rendered. From the beginning, a child should not be allowed to look upon servants as persons who are *paid* to wait upon him ; he should realize that he has duties towards them ; that he himself owes them something for the services they render. If children grow up with this point of view towards those who help in the work of the house, later on, in boyhood or girlhood, when they can realize the abstract facts of duty and gratitude, equally with the concrete facts of money paid and received ; when larger questions interest them and they are beginning to try to think out problems of expenditure, attempting to estimate facts in their due proportion, we rightly tell them what they need to know. But, by satisfying their curiosity when they are small, we should only encourage them in a wrong standpoint.

In such matters, then, our objections are valid. What of those larger questions, of illness and crime, of sex-differences, of birth and death, about which we are also naturally reticent ?

Concerning these, we are influenced to a large extent by the manner in which the child asks for knowledge. There is a self-conscious look, which some children occasionally put on when they ask certain questions, which makes us wonder whether their attitude towards such matters is perfectly natural and healthy.

A girl, about six, pointed to the breasts in a picture of a naked Hottentot woman, asking her mother, in an unnatural manner, what they were. Perfectly simply, her mother replied : " Her breasts, of course, dear. You have often seen me feeding the babies, and you know the wonderful way in which God makes the bodies of mothers, so that they are able to feed the tiny babies when He sends them." The self-conscious look

died out of the child's face. She was not told that she ought not to notice or talk about such things, and, in consequence, she no longer specially wanted to talk about them. Her thoughts were lifted away from the mere detail of some part of the body, which was generally hidden, and therefore specially interesting, on to the thought of God. The parts of the body were created as part of God's great and wonderful purpose.

If, because we do not like the child's manner of asking, we refuse to answer, we only increase the difficulty. The child needs to realize that there is nothing to be ashamed of, nothing to be self-conscious about in a proper knowledge of her own frame. If we create a habit of openness and naturalness in connexion with such matters, in nine cases out of ten any unhealthy element which may exist will disappear like magic.

The fact is that it is often only *our* false ideas of modesty which create in the child any unhealthy interests. When we are perfectly natural, the child is equally so. Another girl, somewhat older, was watching a tiny baby in its bath. The navel was not quite normal, and the girl told her mother afterwards that she had not been able to help being unduly interested in that part of the baby's body. She thought it was not "nice" on her part: but it was simply natural. Her mother told her more than she knew already about a baby's birth, so that she could understand how the navel came to be as it was. The girl was interested, and understood that her question had been a right and proper one.

*If the child's life is full of interests, unhealthy curiosity, if it ever exists, is easily dealt with, simply by means of naturalness and simplicity on our part. Healthy interests drive out unhealthy ones.* What the child needs is a full and vigorous life, indoors and out; fresh air, active exercise; cold baths; regular habits. He needs to enjoy the company of his friends in a home always open to receive them; he needs to read good books, talking of them to the father and mother, who share



his many interests. Day by day, he must be helped to gain self-mastery ; and gradually, as his character grows and strengthens, any undesirable interests are driven out in the delight and fullness of an eager life with his fellows. Any difficulties, which may recur in adolescence, are readily overcome, with our help, by the child himself, if only his early life has been trained in the right direction.

Some painful realities and aspects of life, which distress a child, without being capable of adding to his knowledge, should either be kept from the children or presented in a softened light. In dealing with these difficult questions we need to make a distinction between those facts concerning illness and crime, which are either painful or ugly in themselves, and which cannot be presented in a form which will help the child, and the facts of birth and death and of sex-differences, which can and should be so presented to the children that they are full of wonder and beauty and spiritual truth.

Of painful illness and sudden death, of crime as told in the daily papers, children should know as little as possible. A sensitive child is tortured by the possession of such knowledge ; a child, who is not sensitive, is harmed by knowing of such things, and *not* being touched by them.

Yet it is not enough merely to withhold such information as we may deem unsuitable, doing nothing more, leaving the child's unsatisfied curiosity to seek satisfaction elsewhere.

If we desire that such knowledge should not be sought for, the children's lives must be filled with strong positive interests, so that there is no room for morbid craving ; they must be given in advance beautiful conceptions of birth and death, so that, if ugly knowledge comes to them unsought, its ugliness will be readily recognized ; they need to know and love God, so that as they learn, whether we will or no, of the trouble and

difficulty and imperfection of life, they may be able to rely increasingly on the power of God to help to turn evil into good.

This power we can make a very real thing to the children as they grow older, by helping them to see, in their own daily experience, that even they themselves have a similar power—God-given. When a fault is committed, it is not only to be wept over : the experience must be turned to good account. It should make them stronger to resist a similar temptation the next time, by showing them where they are likely to fail when temptation comes. Every disappointment bravely borne, every pain which is not grumbled at, makes them pluckier in the future. Without some pain, some sorrow, some temptation, even though it first causes them to fail, they could not become the strong and helpful men and women they desire to become. Evil has a disciplinary value. Evil can be turned into good. "Difficulties"—as Dr Paton was wont to say—"difficulties are our delights."

More children than we dream of have a terror of death, of burglars, of pain and sin—resulting from inappropriate and distorted knowledge, received perhaps by the merest chance and for which they were totally unprepared

"On a summer day," writes Pater in "The Child in the House," the child "walked with his mother through a fair churchyard. In a bright dress, he rambled among the graves, in the gay weather, and so came, in one corner, upon an open grave for a child. . . . And therewith came, full-grown, never wholly to leave him, with the certainty that even children do sometimes die, the physical horror of death . . . No benign, grave figure in beautiful soldier's things (his father, a soldier, was dead) any longer abroad in the world for his protection ! Only a few poor, piteous bones ; and above them, possibly, a certain sort of figure he hoped not to see. For sitting one day in the garden below an open window, he heard people talking and could not but listen, how,

in a sleepless hour, a sick woman had seen one of the dead sitting beside her, come to call her hence ; and from the broken talk, evolved, with much clearness, the notion that not all those dead people had really departed to the churchyard, nor were quite so motionless as they looked, but led a secret, half-fugitive life in their old homes, quite free by night, though sometimes visible in the day, dodging from room to room, with no great goodwill towards those who shared the place with them. All night the figure sat beside him in the reveries of his broken sleep, and was not quite gone in the morning—an odd, irreconcilable new member of the household, making the sweet familiar chambers unfriendly and suspect by its uncertain presence.”

It is well for us that such writers as Pater can remind us of these sombre questionings that at times haunt the children, that we may realize their intense need of companionship, of comforting thoughts, in facing these great facts of life. God, the loving Father, can and will finally make all things right : good will finally overcome evil. “ Please God make the burglars and witches good, for I do love them all the same ”—was the nightly prayer of a sensitive lad of five. God was great and strong and loving ; in His good time, the wicked would be made righteous, and he could leave them safely in His care.

Concerning death, children, so open minded, are ready to receive a beautiful conception. They know the sense of deep restfulness, of grateful pleasure, in lying down to sleep when they are weary at night. They sleep, and in the morning wake, “ with morning faces and with morning hearts,” refreshed and strong. “ God giveth His beloved sleep.” And when we grow old, and have worked hard for so long, until we are now tired out and glad to rest ; or when we are weary with pain—the good God loves us so much that He puts us to sleep again—this time for a long sleep. Our bodies were worn out and had done their work ; but

our spirit still lives. Such a thought presents no special difficulty to the children—"if only we don't explain." They know that Mother is not the *body* of Mother. Mother loves them, she plans for them and sympathizes with them—but it isn't only her lips which love when she kisses, or only her arms that love when she embraces them at bedtime. The thought, the love, the kindly consideration—*that* is really Mother—"the inner part of her that we don't understand," as the child puts it. When someone passes away whom the child loves, who loved the child, although the body is here asleep and will be put away, it can be a beautiful thought to the child that the loved one has only gone to God, because he was too tired to work here any more, that the heart that seems dead is really alive, and can, and does, love him still. "Whom the Gods lent us, hath rejoined the Gods"—as men said at Rome on the death of Marcus Aurelius. With our outward signs of mourning, we spoil the beauty of death to the child

The funeral anthem is a glad Evangel,  
The good die not

When the children ask questions which are beyond the power of the oldest and wisest amongst us to explain, we can but frankly own our inability to understand. The only answer for them, as for us, is to be found in Faith—"On the earth, the broken arcs—in Heaven, a perfect round."

Birth, too, should be a beautiful thing. It seems, when one thinks of it, almost incredible that concerning "the most sacred, the most profound and vital of all human functions," we should leave our children to pick up their information from chance, and often ill-instructed, sources. How common it is, when they first begin to question, to tell them lies—that the baby was brought in the doctor's bag, or found in the cabbage-bed or what not; or to irritate the child, and transform his natural and open interest into a concealed and morbid curiosity, by constantly postponing his ques-

tions, by the careless remark : " You can't understand that till you are bigger. You must wait. Don't bother."

Is it not our own wrong point of view that keeps us shy ?<sup>1</sup> our own blindness that hides the true light from our children ? Is it not our laziness in thinking how best to answer the child's questions which keeps us ignorant as to what reply to give ? Is there not, as soon as the child really wants to know about these things, *something* of the truth which he can understand, and which, for the time being, will be sufficient for him ?

" God sent the baby," we can tell them. " How " is a mystery. But is not the world full of mystery ? Where does the wind come from ? and the thunder and lightning ? How are water and gas, even, brought into our houses ? That is mysterious enough to the child. He is willing to accept mystery as such. God is familiar to him. He helps him to grow better, He takes care of him in the dark nights. But he knows that he cannot *understand* God's wonders : he just *accepts* them. God made Father and Mother, He made the daisies which spring up like magic every Spring, He made the dear kitten ; and now, He has made the baby and sent him as a gift to Mother ! The answer for a time is enough, and it is nearer to the truth than any other answer which we could give to the child at that age, or indeed at any age.

A boy, between two and three years old, observant beyond his years, had asked his mother whence the babies came, and was told in simple language the primal facts of motherhood. " It's the same then as with all animals," was the little lad's quick reply.

Is it the same as with all animals ? Is this what we want the child to believe ? I think not. The concrete

<sup>1</sup> " The differentiation of the sexes is often resented as an insult, and often treated as an indecent irrelevancy. But in this, as in other matters, it is the conduct and arguments of mankind that are indecent, insolent and irrelevant, not the foundation laid by nature " (quoted from Rev Philip Wicksteed in an article by John Russell M.A. : " Can the School prepare for Parenthood ? ").

facts of the birth of a human baby are the merest superficial truths beside the wonder, the mystery, the beauty, hidden in the birth itself. "Love is a lovely thing, Mother," said a little philosopher of nine years old, "and when you come to think about it, Love is *the* thing that matters most in the world. The world couldn't go on without it, could it? For if men and women didn't love, they would not marry and have children. It's different for animals, they just have little ones without loving first." Only an answer which takes Love into account is true to the highest facts of human birth. God, who *is* Love, sent the baby.

But later, the child will need to know more. When he can realize more fully his own love for his mother and father, their love for one another, God's love for His children, he is ready to understand more of the special details connected with the facts of birth. When he has seen his father and mother working side by side as loving comrades, not nagging and fault-finding, he can realize Love as the true source of Life. *He will then be prepared to receive the greatest of all truths.* He must have seen and understood, in his simple way, the ideal of manhood and womanhood striven for in his home, not only in his father's and mother's mutual respect for one another, but in the respect shown to servants and charwomen, to the workmen about the place, by brothers and sisters to each other. He must have begun to learn control over himself, not merely with regard to his bodily functions, but control over his will, his desires, his physical appetites. He must have learnt somewhat of self-knowledge, of self-reverence, of self-control, of love and reverence for others. Then, we can quietly wait for our opportunity and choose our own way of telling.

We may choose a birthday night, we may choose Christmas Day, or chance may suddenly open to us a time to speak—but some specially glad night, when we feel very near to the child, we can tell him how a little seed was once planted in our body, like the wonderful

seeds which he has planted in his garden ; that the little baby-seed grew and grew, keeping close to our heart, nourished by us, loved by us all the time ; until, after months of love and patient waiting, the baby came.

My own impression is that the pain of birth should not be dwelt upon. We want the child to realize that pain can be forgotten in a greater joy. We want the child to understand the glad rapture of birth ; the baby conceived in Love, cradled in Love in the mother's womb, and, in due time, brought forth in the glory of the Love which blots out all thought of pain. " I always wondered where my love came from ; and now I know," said a boy of seven, when he was first told of the method of his own growth.

Much detail is, I believe, undesirable. Many of the books designed to help mothers in these matters give more information on sex questions than even grown up people need to possess. A thorough understanding of such detail necessitates close attention being paid to the *physical* facts underlying motherhood : and this may be harmful and is certainly premature. *It is the spiritual, which underlies the physical, which we want to realize ourselves more and more fully, and to help our children to realize.* It is not, then, any special study of physical details, either in botany, in the animal world, or in our own experience, which is needful ; it is an increasing realization of the mystery and beauty of human birth at its best—as God willed it to be.

And then the Babe .

A tiny perfect sea-shell on the shore  
By the waves gently laid (the awful waves !)—  
By trembling hands received—a folded message—  
A babe yet slumbering, with a ripple on its face  
Remindful of the ocean  
And two twined forms that overbend it, smiling,  
And wonder to what land Love must have journeyed,  
Who brought this back—this word of sweetest meaning :  
*Two lives made one, and visible as one*

And herein all Creation.

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To tell our children the facts of motherhood we need, then, no special study : it is different with the facts of fatherhood. But after all, most children nowadays learn botany at school, and we need only to suggest the application of what they have already studied. They have analysed the flowers, they know their different parts ; they have learnt about the pollen with its infinite number of tiny grains , about the pistil and ovary with its " little house full of very tiny children." They have heard that " when the pollen of one flower, carried away by the wind, or by the insects, fell on the pistil of another flower, the small grains died, and a tiny drop of moisture passed through the tube and entered into the house where the very tiny children dwelt ; that these tiny children were like small eggs, that in each small egg was an almost invisible opening, through which a little of the small drop passed ; that when this drop of pollen mixed with some other wonderful power in the ovary, both joined together to give life, and the eggs developed and became grains or fruit " <sup>1</sup>

We need, therefore, only to remind the children of such botany lessons, telling them that the pistils are like " little mothers," and the stamens like " little fathers of the fruit " : the same thing, we may add, " happens to human beings, with this difference, that what is done unconsciously by the plants, is done consciously by us ; " that, with us, the children should be the outcome of love between father and mother.

*If our own thoughts are clear, if our own conception of what the facts of birth should and might be is a noble one, we shall regard the telling of the children, not as a task to be shirked or faced with difficulty, but, when the time is ripe, as a high privilege to be valued. Most of our difficulties arise from lack of clear thinking.*

A few words in conclusion on the subject of childish

<sup>1</sup> " La revendication des droits féminins " (Shafts, April, 1894 p. 237 ; given in Appendix to " Love's Coming of Age," by Edward Carpenter),



curiosity with regard to Santa Claus, Father Christmas, fairies and the like.

The holly and mistletoe, the Christmas tree, the giving and receiving of presents are the *visible* phenomena of Christmas time; but the generosity, the happiness, the "peace on earth and goodwill amongst men" are the spiritual facts which lie behind the material. It is these which are embodied in Father Christmas, Santa Claus, and the Christ-Child; these are but the concrete representation of spiritual facts, which, if they were not so represented, might be lost sight of by the children. Could this kindly, generous spirit of rejoicing at Christmas be better embodied than in Father Christmas or Santa Claus, rosy-cheeked, white-bearded, kindly-eyed, young in heart though old in years, revelling in the delicious surprises which the children love—of chimneys, and stockings, and midnight hours, when all are asleep! Or, could this lesson of Christmas be more fitly taught than by the Christ-Child of German legend? For Christmas is not merely old, it is also ever young—young in joy, young in generosity. The Christ-Child of Christmas embodies for us the ideals of Christianity—ideals which we can never attain, but which we may ever strive to reach. At Christmas, thinking of the Christ-Child, we may, if only for that one day, "hitch our waggon to a star"!

If, then, Father Christmas and the Christ-Child, bringing gifts, are representations of such deep underlying truths, it is well that we should cherish them for the children's sake. It cannot surely be right to tell them merely that there is no such person as Santa Claus or Father Christmas; that it is absurd to talk about their coming down chimneys, or driving in sledges in the midnight; that Father and Mother buy the presents which they find in their stockings! The spirit of Father Christmas lives each year. It may work *through* the father and mother; but the Spirit is indeed real; it is the Spirit of God. If we, with our

want of imagination, too early rob the child of this truth, thus presented in a concrete form, for a time, at any rate, we rob him of part of the truth itself.

A little lad, between three and four years old, begged to know if there *really* was such a person as Father Christmas. Instead of helping him to *understand*, his mother told him that it was only his father and mother who brought the gifts. The child's distress was great. "I wish I hadn't asked," he cried; "Christmas won't be a bit the same now." With more insight, could not that mother have found some way of satisfying his questionings, keeping for him the mystery and the essence of the truth? In early childhood, the abstract must be clothed in the concrete; gradually, if we do not over-interfere, the children will cast off the latter, retaining the former, and still will understand.

The romance of fairies, gnomes and sprites is, to my mind, equally full of spiritual truth. Every flower, every leaf, every object around us has a spirit of its own, is fraught with mystery. They are more than mere material objects; they are, as it were, thoughts of the Creative Power, clothed in matter. Can the Spirit of love, of power, of beauty, of humour, embodied in the world, be more fitly expressed for the child than in this undergrowth, as it were, of tiny creatures, haunting the night, when the "humans" are asleep; this world of moral, immoral and non-moral fairy beings. If we read such stories as Barrie's "Little White Bird," with the eyes and heart of the child and the mind of the grown man or woman, we become increasingly conscious of the child's need for all this imagining, of the deep underlying truth of fairy lore.

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## CHAPTER XI

### THE DAWN OF RELIGION

The capacity for religious feeling precedes the capacity for religious thought—The influence of environment—A closer knowledge of God is gained through the child's daily occupations in Nature—The child as a conscious co-worker with God—The love of God results from the effort to grow good, even as He is good—The realization of God as power and love in the Universe—Reverence for God as the Father in Heaven—The child's need of a personal God—Children's prayers.

It is by the spiritual side of our nature that we perceive there is a rule of life, which lifts our everyday experience on to a higher level. It finds its due exercise in the religious life, which consists of two things :—

(1) The feeling that there is a Higher Power, and the recognition of the way in which It manifests Itself.

When the child has been taught occasionally to dwell on his experience in this respect, he soon learns to realize that the things which are not seen are of infinitely greater importance than the things which are seen.

(2) The conscious surrender of our entire selves in worship of that Higher Power, which surrender leads us to devote our energies and faculties to the service of that Power.

In this chapter, I shall not deal with special theological teaching, nor doctrines of any kind. I merely want to deal with the instinctive tendencies of the child's nature, by which he is placed in harmony with the spiritual laws of existence, with the growth in him of the spirit of reverence for the good and true, not only in things which are seen but in things which are unseen.

The child is capable of religious feeling, that is of a sense of dependence and worship, long before he is capable of religious thought, that is of definite knowledge of God ; in fact, unless this religious feeling be early fostered, his capacity for religious thought becomes increasingly difficult as he grows older. Given

suitable teaching, children are, without exception, early capable of realizing that there is a higher and a lower rule of conduct, and that the sense of satisfaction, which results from obedience to the higher law, is far greater, incomparably greater, and more truly satisfying, than that which results from obedience to the lower law. The extent to which this can be realized by different children naturally depends on the fineness and depth of the child's moral nature and the fullness of his spiritual endowment. This is largely a matter of inheritance, but also to some extent a matter of training. The result of training is, in its turn, not a little dependent on the capacity of the trainer to appeal to the child's moral and spiritual nature, and to his powers of comprehension. A capacity for religious life is innate in all children, and only dies down later for want of early nourishment. Early in life he tries to find the invisible cause at the back of the visible object. What is the wind ? Where does it come from ? What makes the birds fly ? Who made us ? He is full of eager questionings, unconsciously striving towards the discovery of the truth, that, behind all visible manifestations of life, is a great Invisible

Miss Emily Poullson, in her book on "Love and Law and Child Training," speaking of babies, quotes this verse :—

Hardly you seem a life at all ,  
Only a something with hands and feet ,  
Only a feeling that things are warm ,  
Only a longing for something to eat.

But we know that there is nothing in later life which has not its germ in child-life, and nothing in child-life which has not its germ in the baby. He may seem only a Something, but he is a Somebody in embryo ; not only the child, but, in a certain sense, the baby is father of the man. What is not yet manifested by the child must be nurtured in the child.

Long before the child is capable of religious thought, or of any self-expression in religious life, he is capable

of religious feeling ; and therefore he must be nurtured in the religious life from early infancy. The vague gradually becomes definite. We must proceed as gently as possible, and with respect to this kind, as with all other kinds, of development, work first only through the general influences surrounding the child. The small child receives religious impressions unconsciously, but he does respond to them, and gradually they grow from mere vague impressions to definite thoughts. As his physical condition is healthily or injuriously affected by the badness or goodness of the air which he breathes, so will the religious atmosphere by which he is surrounded determine his religious development. It therefore remains for those of us who are responsible for children to cultivate our own religious life. The muscles of our bodies grow weak, and ultimately become useless, if we do not use them ; should we cease to use our teeth, they would decay and slowly rot away ; the same is the case with our spiritual life. If we live in the things which are seen and temporal, in the scurry of a too busy life, for six days or more of the week, and only for an hour or so, on Sundays, turn our thoughts to the Unseen and Eternal, our capacity for religious feeling and thought will dwindle, and with it our unconscious—and I might also say our strongest—influence on the development of the spiritual life of the children. We must fill ourselves with the truth that the Unseen is more important than the seen, though keeping in touch with the seen world. The good thoughts in us will exhibit themselves unconsciously through our actions, even through our bodily gestures and expression, silently and unconsciously making an impression on the child's heart. The child's first idea of prayer, writes Froebel, comes to him when an infant, by his mother's kneeling beside his crib in silent prayer ; her bowed head and kneeling body tell of submission to, and reverence for, a power greater than herself ; her tone of voice when she speaks of sacred things is far more effectual with the listener

than the words she says. If she is teaching him to love goodness, teaching him that goodness is God, that God is everywhere, she does this best, not by the respect which she shows to goodness in the abstract, but by the warmth of her tribute to goodness in others around her—in the concrete. "How can I hear what you say," wrote Emerson, "when what you are is thundering in my ears?"

We can then cultivate the spiritual life in the children, first and foremost, by cultivating it in ourselves. The spirit of reverence, which the child will catch, as it were, from us, implies a capacity for religion; *the child is capable of receiving religious impressions, long before he is capable of receiving religious instruction.*

How, further than by impressions received thus unconsciously from those around him, can the child's spiritual life be developed?

Partly through self-activity; partly, if I may put it in that way, by watching God.

I will speak first of the child's self-activity, because although, in later life, there is too much self-activity and too little of watching God, teaching in childhood, in the form of words only, is as good as thrown away. The child can only learn the power and goodness of the Spirit at the back of the Universe by, as it were, sharing in God's works, working hand in hand with Him. Such an idea presents no difficulties to a child. Norman when he was about five years old had got into the bad habit of constant grumbling. Nothing was ever right. At last it was suggested that he should ask God's help. Each night, earnestly, the little laddie asked God to help him to get rid of his "nasty little trick"—his own method of explaining to God what he wanted. The prayer expressed genuine desire and earnest faith, the boy was trying harder, and in a few days, he began to improve. One night, when his mother was hearing his prayers, she expressed her gladness at his improvement.

"When you ask God to help you do anything," he

said, "you have to try your very hardest yourself, then He does the last little bit you can't manage. If He did it all, it would be spoiling!"

The same idea was expressed by an older boy of nine in one of those moments of self-revelation which are precious in childhood. "I feel," he said, "as if God was like a nurse or a mother. If you ask Him to make you good, you don't have just to ask and forget all about it and leave it to Him. You have to try your hardest—just ~~as~~ you have to try to do any hard job for yourself, and your nurse or your mother helps you to finish."

This way of looking at prayers for goodness was probably not originated by the children, something must have been said at some time to give them such an idea—but the idea once suggested seemed natural to them. They responded instinctively to the suggestion that they were co-workers with God.

Such a thought can be made use of in developing the child's feeling of wonder and reverence for God's works in the Universe. What the child has tried to do for himself, he understands and appreciates when done by others. Donald once asked his mother what seemed to her the most wonderful thing in the whole world. After thinking a minute, she replied: "The birth of a little baby." The boy knew somewhat of this greatest of all miracles, but even so, it did not strike him as so very wonderful, in the way it did an older person. "Oh, I don't," he said, "I think that the way they make gas and bring it along pipes into everybody's houses, and the way it gives us light in the night is far more wonderful. Sometimes when I am getting off to sleep at night, I think about it and try to imagine how they do it." Man's work struck the child as more wonderful than God's work, because, by trying to do similar things himself, he had some inkling of their difficulty.

If the children are to understand God as Creator, it must be through their own daily occupations, through the planting of seeds, the tending of animals,

their own personal activity. Ruth and Mary, about five years old, shared between them a flower-bed, and in this bed they, like the other children in the school, had sown a few peas and beans.<sup>1</sup> Every day they would grub up the earth with their little hands, to see why the seeds did not come up, much as Budge and Toddy, having buried the dead bird, dug up the earth to find out when the bird went to Heaven. In the other children's beds, little green seedlings were beginning to peep above the ground, and these two inquisitive little ones looked sadly at them, and then at their own beds, where nothing was yet showing. It was explained to them that if they wanted their own seeds to grow, they must be patient and leave them alone for a while. So every day they visited their garden, and, with great self-control, refrained from touching the soil—and at last, one morning, they were found kneeling by the bed, in a perfect transport of wonder and delight at the tiny green blades which were just peeping up above the ground.

They had seen plants growing often enough, but they had never paid much attention, because they themselves had not taken any part in sowing and caring for the seedlings. But now, for the first time, they were consciously face to face with this wonder of Nature; yesterday there was nothing to be seen, to-day little green leaves were peeping through the soil! "Was it you, children," the teacher asked, "who made them grow?" "No," said Mary, "God did it"; and then the teacher told them how God made the sun shine, so as to warm the earth, then sent the dew and rain to soften the ground, and so helped the seeds to grow. Little Ruth and Mary were keenly interested; and later in the day, when the children were matting, out of the fullness of her heart, Ruth asked if she could give hers to God!

"For the development of religion, the teaching of

<sup>1</sup> This story is told from one given by Baroness von Bulow in her book "Child and Child Nature."



visible phenomena must come before that of words ; the Creator must first reveal Himself in His visible works, before He can be apprehended as the Invisible God of our spirits." We are consciously reverent, if we know ourselves to be working with God. In a great hospital in Paris, on the frieze round the operating theatre, are painted these words : " Man dressed the wound, God healed it."

The child's spiritual nature, then, is developed by self-activity, both in working with God in the realm of Nature, and in the doing of righteousness. The little lad of five, Lewis, who wanted to be a Christian soldier, was helped by his ideal, when there was trouble which he had to bear manfully. He was fighting on God's side, and, as a faithful soldier in the Christian Army, he was able in his childlike way to understand and love the Great Head. Neville, when he was about the same age, on some particular occasion did not want to be unselfish ; he resisted all efforts made to get him to do the unselfish deed, and the matter was, for the time being, put aside. He was a child who, for a while, every now and again, was full of questions on spiritual matters, and then, for a while again, lived wholly in this world. On this particular occasion, something made him ask the question, " What is God's Spirit ? " He was told that it was God's Spirit inside us that made us do good and loving actions, and think good and true thoughts. Not realizing the possible connexion with what had gone before—the selfish action on his part—the explanation went on : " It is God's Spirit inside you that makes you act unselfishly when it is hard, that makes you tell the truth when you have done wrong ; God's spirit grows strong in you and you grow more like God, every time you do the right." " I see," he answered, and nothing more was said. But he was quietly pondering. In a few minutes he said : " I want the good spirit to grow strong in me ; Marjorie may have that toy."

The child's spiritual nature can only develop by

self-activity ; he who would know the Creator must exercise his own creative power, he who would know God as good must himself try to be good. The doing of what is good is the most potent tie between the Creator and the creature. *The child needs to realize that he is a co-worker in goodness with God, that God needs his enlistment among those fighting for right.* "There is something else," says Froebel, "which early awakens in your child a respect for goodness, and a feeling of emulation and aspiration to attain unto goodness—that is, to *be good.*"

But the child must be further trained to watch God, to realize that, behind all the visible manifestations of life, there is an Invisible Power, that this great, loving, Unseen Power exists, not only in the Universe of Nature, but in the child's own life and that of those around him. The first groping after the Unseen is an important moment in the child's life ; but the power of the Unseen in the world without must be realized, before the child can at all apprehend the power of the Unseen over the world within, in his own nature.

The first of these unseen forces which he notices is often that of the wind. He sees the smoke blown from the chimneys ; the weathercock turns this way and that, with no hand to move it. He feels himself carried off his feet, yet no one lifts him. We let him imitate the moving weathercock, not merely for the sake of the mechanical imitation, but because, when he imitates, he more nearly understands. These first impressions matter ; they are the "root fibres of the child's early understanding of the Unseen." It is an unseen force within him which moves his hand , so there must be some unseen force which turns the weathercock. This sequence of thought occurs naturally to the child ; it does not need to be pointed out. Unprompted, he compares his own powers with the power exercised by God. The window of Norman's bedroom—he was about four years old—had been left open, and was blown out during the day by a strong gale of wind.

The window had been mended, but he was nervous at having to sleep there again, and comforted himself at night by asking God to take care of him. "Please God," he prayed, "don't let any more wind out to-night, so as my window won't be blown in"—as if the winds of God were similar to the breath with which he himself cooled his morning porridge!

Let the works of Nature, then, be shown to the child in such a way that he may dimly realize the wonderful side of Science, that is beyond all explanation. "Dame Nature is the greatest of all teachers with her illuminated text-book of field and forest, sea and sky." Let the child realize that the greatest things in life are invisible. There are many stories which we can tell the child through which this truth may be felt by him, and these should be used rather than those in which it is told to them. Just as we, in after years, grow to see, with ever greater clearness, the invisible power at work throughout all history, grow to see that in the end the battle is not to the strong nor the race to the swift, that "one with God is a majority"—so the child, in his own life history, in his experiences in the nursery, home and school, may unconsciously gain the conviction that God rules there also, that right wins and not might.

What does this mean for us in the details of their life? We must see to it that the children do not feel that we win in nursery struggles just because we are stronger and cleverer than they, but rather that the higher law of love and order, as working in and through us, triumphs. Then they will be ready to believe that, in ordering the world, God is not an arbitrary despot any more than we, but a wise and loving Ruler. The child will gain his thoughts about God more from what we *are* than from what we *say*. We must let him see that we hate to punish, that we are sad at wrongdoing; that we sympathize with joy, that we are patient and loving with the sinner, and only hate the sin. If we meet true repentance half way, the child can enter into the Parable of the Prodigal Son. We must

do the right cheerfully ourselves and appreciate right-doing in the children. We must let them realize that all are called upon to obey the Higher Law, that even God respects the laws which He Himself has made. We do not need to give reasons for all our actions, but we must give the children cause for, and help them to develop, that faith in us, which they will need to have in God, when they are faced with the difficulties of the world. We must let goodness, as far as in us lies, pervade the moral order of things.

So much, then, for the cultivation in the child of the realization of God as power and love in the universe. But the Power that made the worlds, that made light and darkness, and the daisies under the child's feet, made the child himself and those whom he loves, and takes care of all the creatures of His Hand. "Not a sparrow falleth to the ground but the Heavenly Father knoweth it." How is the child to gain love and reverence for God as the Father in Heaven?

Many children early show their need of a personal God "Who'll take care of me when there's nobody with me?" "Why can't the witches be made good? Can anyone make bad people good? I don't like them to be wicked." "Where did Baby come from? Who brought her here?" "Why do you love me? Who makes you love me?" "Who made the daisies?" "Where did I come from, and where shall I go to when I die?" asked Helen Keller, the American girl, who was blind and deaf and dumb. This same child one day wrote on her tablet for her teacher—"I wish to write about things I do not understand. Who made the earth and the seas and everything? What makes the sun hot? Where was I before I came to Mother? I know that plants grow from seeds which are in the ground, but I am sure people do not grow that way. I never saw a child-plant. Little birds and chickens come out of eggs, I have seen them. What was the egg before it was an egg? Why does not the earth fall, it is so very large and heavy? Tell me something that Father Nature

does? (She was familiar with Mother Nature.) May I read the book called the Bible? Please tell your little pupil many things when you have much time."

Some of their questions the children cannot formulate, it is a help to them when they can formulate them, but there is much in life to puzzle and to trouble them. Some of them show an instinctive need for a Power, which will work in them as it works in the universe, though I do not think all children have this need, and they are often not conscious of it even when they possess it.

This consciousness of a God, in personal relation to the child, is a great help to some children very early in life. Perhaps I shall make this need clearer, if I use an analogy. It is suggested by Matthew Arnold's poem, in which he describes The Life of Man.

A wanderer is man from his birth  
He was born in a ship  
On the breast of the River of Time

Let us, for a few minutes, think of the babies as gliding each in his own tiny vessel on the River of Time. The baby at the start cannot manage his own craft. There is much to learn. The tiny vessels are perfect in their mechanism. There is the propelling force of impulse and power, capable of infinite development and strong even in early days; there is capacity for control; but for long we have to help direct the tiny vessel along its ordered path. The inner force is there, and we can remove some of the obstacles which interfere with its journey. Parents, nurses and teachers are the pilots on board, directing certain impulses, encouraging others, and in this way favouring the voyage, adjusting the sails to the outside breezes of circumstances and environment

For a while the tiny owners of the vessels seem mere spectators, but not for long. A very few months and they begin to be agents. Self-consciousness begins to develop "I a girlie, Nurse—I a girlie, Nurse," the thought constantly recurs in the mind of a mite of two years old, and she is glad in the thought. Early

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will begins to show itself. The children feel their own power and they want to guide their own vessels. "By-self—by-self," is the cry. Sometimes they are more ready to learn. We, the pilots, instruct them in little ways first. We show them how to adjust the sails, how to steer. But they are wayward—the owners of these wonderful vessels. Sometimes they prefer to try their own way and for a while we leave them. The vessels flounder miserably, and we must again take the management into our hands.

But all the time, we are conscious that we must not overdo our work as a pilot, that the children must learn to pilot their own vessels. We must not guide too much or too long, better that the vessel should flounder occasionally. So, as we have seen, we gradually teach the children. We make them do some things again and again in the management of their boat, until they become easy. We are forming habits. We teach them habits of accuracy in thought, word and deed. We train them in the habit of attention. Our early training in order and neatness will have developed in them a capacity for orderliness of mind, which will be a great help to them. We train them not to let emotions pass away in mere feeling, but always to take shape in action. This helps them not to drift, swayed first here, then there, by emotional circumstances. We train them to obey our commands, in order that, through learning to obey, they can later take over command. Gradually, more and more, we leave to them the management of their own vessels, though the pilot is watching, never very far off. But—and here we come back to the need of the cultivation of the spiritual life—many children, when thus left alone, now and again feel their powerlessness in the face of the strong forces, either within their own natures or in outward circumstances—forces which they know are driving their vessels wrong and which they cannot control. They cry out for help—such help as even the pilot, with all the will in the world, cannot give them.

Stephen was about four and was prone to fits of rudeness and anger. One day, there had been a particularly sad exhibition of temper, and his mother, thinking he might get help from prayer—she had tried with all her might to teach him self-control, but failure was frequent—added, when he had finished his prayers at night that she wanted to say a few words to God for him. “Don’t tell Him about to-day,” urged the poor little lad, his conscience pricking him at once, but when his mother told him that He knew without being told, and was so sorry, and wanted to help—“If He knows,” he added, “I am glad. Do ask Him to help me, I can’t manage.” Terrible fits of passion may occasionally be quelled as by a miracle, by the asking of help, if the child possesses faith in God. Prayer calms the tumult instantly. The child is conscious of his own weakness and feels the need of God’s strength.

Yet another story, showing the help to a child of the knowledge of a personal God; it is amusing, but pathetic also. Leonard, about five years old, had a sister as well as brothers, but had always a decided preference for the boys. From the time he was a tiny tot of two, he always seemed to have a natural objection to girls. If they came to play in his nursery, he would knock them down if he got the chance, and take their toys away—bully them in his baby way. This feeling almost amounted to an instinctive dislike and did not disappear as he grew older. It was hard on his little sister Eva, who was particularly devoted to him, to hear that girls were “horrid,” he would give her away to anybody; to hear him lamenting that the family was not all boys. When he grew up, he would sometimes say, he would ask God to give him a hundred boys for children, and not one girl. Girls were all right when they grew up and became mothers and nurses, if only they never had to be girls! One night, his mother spoke to him seriously about this, how unkind it was, etc., but he persisted that he could not help it, he felt that way and had to say it. “Would you like to feel

differently ? ” his mother asked. He thought he would. “ Well then,” his mother said, “ why don’t you ask God to help you ? Ask Him, and make up your mind that, while He is helping you, you will never say, and will try not even to think, that you don’t like them.” Leonard agreed. Solemnly, each night, he asked God to help him to learn to love little girls. Earnestly he tried through the day to say nothing to the contrary—it was often hard to check himself, but it appealed to him as fair that he must keep his side of the bargain. One day, after about ten days of prayer and effort, he was playing happily with his sister. Suddenly the thought flashed through his mind ! He ran across to his mother, “ Mother, God *is* helping me to learn to love little girls ; ” with God’s help, he felt he was winning in that struggle. Eva was eager to know what he had whispered. “ Shall I tell her ? ” he asked. His mother gave assent. He put his arms round her, and whispered : “ I have been asking God to help me to learn to love you, and I do now.”

The child needs the help of a Power outside himself, Whom he believes is always with him, knows his inmost thoughts, understands him, loves him, “ keeps care of him,” as the children say, and helps him when he tries to be good—he needs to know and love God.

The instances, which I have given, tell of brief struggles, of a momentary consciousness of the great need of God. They are fleeting glimpses into himself on the part of the child, a sudden and brief realization of the forces controlling his life. They should never be more than momentary in early childhood, they are not to be recalled, they are seen and treasured as a sign that the little vessel has its head turned and kept, as far as may be, in the right direction, they are our reward for our faithful labour, as the first pilot of the boat.

Not only, however, is the child conscious of his personal need of God, but some children are, now and again, painfully conscious of the limitations and imperfections of life, and need to believe that there is a



controlling and compelling and protecting force in the universe. Robert, when about four years old, touched by the thought of the suffering endured by the soldiers in the South African War, was soothed by his prayer each night: "Please take care of the soldiers in the hospital, and give them bobril to make them better"—he had seen the advertisement of Bovril, where the hospital nurses are tending the wounded men. Lewis, the five-year-old Christian Soldier, always prayed: "Please try and make the burglars and the witches good, although I do love them all the same." Were it not that he believed God could ultimately achieve this end, and that the witches in the fairy stories were only apparently put to an end when cast into the fire, most of such stories would have given him pain and made him dream at night.

These stories all illustrate the one point, which I touched on at the end of the analogy—the child's need for a Power—a loving, all-knowing, all-protecting Power, outside himself. It is not nearly as hard as it seems to give to the child a simple religion of this kind, that is, if we believe it ourselves; the child does not question overmuch, he does not need any religious doctrine. It is easy to a child, with his strong imagination, to love One whom he has never seen, when he knows that that One made all the beautiful flowers, the animals he plays with in the farmyard, Mother and Father and all good friends—that all the child sees around him of happiness, love, beauty and goodness are from God. He is "*such* a good God," the children say, "I do love Him so." "God is a good old chap to take care of everybody," a little boy of four once said, in an outburst of feeling. "I love Him as much as Father and Mother, because He gave them to me," Maurice said, when he was five. This same little fellow, happy in the possession of a particularly loving nature, out of the goodness of his heart, unprompted, each night used to say: "Please God, thank you for this good gift of loving." Where the thought came from,

how he came to express it so, his mother could not tell. But it becomes part of the children's natures to love and give thanks to the Giver of all good things, to reverence Him and His gifts in their baby way ; and this is the first step towards self-reverence.

Many of the stories which I have given are connected with children's prayers. Just a few words in conclusion on the meaning and value of prayer in childhood. Prayer is communion with God ; prayer is " the highest expression of the inner gathering up of all the powers of the soul " It therefore demands concentration of thought, an effort of imagination, the feeling of gratitude and love. How are these to be acquired by the tiny child ?

In the first place, the words of the prayer, if words have to be suggested, must be in touch with the child's experience and feelings.

In the second place, such experience must be recalled, and the feeling of love re-awakened, as a preliminary to prayer. Only in this way can prayer be real on the part of the child.

In the third place, we should remember that a reverent attitude helps to engender concentration of thought and a feeling of reverence.

We have lately become increasingly conscious of the way in which mind and soul act upon the body ; it is not so easy for us to realize that the body also acts upon the soul, that outward gesture and attitude react upon inward feeling. But this is a fact—and a scientific fact—which we need to realize. The attitude of the child helps to generate his religious feeling. The child, when he prays, should then fold his hands reverently, and close his eyes. " The gentle folding of the hands, with an external quietness, impresses the little soul with an inner feeling of collected force or unity, which is the germ of that great and strong religious conviction, which leads us to speak of God as the Life in Whom we live and move and have our being."

*But, in the cultivation of the child's spiritual life, as in all else, do not be in a hurry, do not try to 'orce the child.* Children are not ready for prayer at any fixed period in their lives. In some, the instinct of affection and gratitude is late in developing. If they do not greatly love the father whom they have seen, how can they love a Father whom they have not seen? And if they do not love, are they ready to pray? The first condition of all religion is the merging of self-love into other love. "Love goes before faith. Not to love is not to believe, for it is love which makes us feel that the object is worthy of our faith." Bit by bit, in the case of such children, we need to develop the loving side of their nature, and watch for our opportunity to tell them of God. Some children can truly pray before they are three, others not till much later. But the earlier, the better, if the prayer is real. Until they can pray themselves, we must let them see that we pray for them. But when they begin to be capable of unselfish love towards those around them, begin to grow in their power of imagination—on some specially glad day, when we are tucking them up at night, we can remind them of all the glad things in their lives—recall the joys of that day, the beautiful sunshine, the flowers in the garden, the romp with Father, the kisses and the hugs at bedtime, till the little one glows with conscious joy! Then we can ask: "Who gives you all this joy? Who makes Father and Mother love you? Who makes you love them—the loving that makes you glad?" We can tell them it is God who gives all good things; would they like to thank God? If the children respond, and they will respond if we have chosen the right moment—with their eyes shut and hands reverently folded, we let them say their first spontaneous prayer. "Thank you for making me happy, please make everybody happy"—is one such first prayer. The form of prayer will depend upon the child, and our suggestions to the child—but we must see that it is real.

The consciousness and love of God can only gradually

grow and develop, but the seed has been planted, and we can tend it carefully. Above all, we need to see that the feeling is kept alive. Frances' prayers were very often more or less a matter of form, until one day she had a longed-for paint box given to her. Her heart was very full of gratitude, and the flood of feeling that night made her prayer a real thanksgiving. "Please thank you, God, for putting it into Father's head to give me that paint-box, and thank the people who sold it to him at the shop, and the people who made it, and—You Who helped them all." Back and back went her mind in spontaneous thankfulness to each one, and finally to God, the Great First Cause. There must be the outpouring of the heart. We must not allow it to become a habit to approach God, in outward form only, at a set time, as part of the order of the day.

In conclusion, I want once again to refer to the need on our part to keep in touch with the child's world. We should tell him of a God Whom he can understand and love, not of a Being too vast and impersonal for his childlike comprehension. We should draw his attention to God's work only in the beautiful things in life, the mystery of sin and suffering will trouble him soon enough. We should not "force him out of his unconsciousness into self-consciousness by demanding of him reflection, by checking the joy of his receptiveness, by too much teaching, too much forcing, but let him remain for a time ignorant of himself, and abide in his Heavenly Father's hands; let him live naturally, and drink in his wisdom and his religion from the influences which God makes play around him. Above all [we should] not demand of him, as many do, convictions of sin . . . [but] let him begin with natural religion . . . [and] see that he knows God as Love, and Beauty and Sympathy."<sup>1</sup> Above all, we need to remember that it is not by what we say, but by what we are, that we really teach the children.

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## CHAPTER XII

### SOME DIFFERENT TYPES OF CHILDREN

Need for recognition of individuality—Marked differences in children—Dominant characteristics. Strength of will and determination (masterfulness, tenacity of purpose), Emotion; Keeness of reasoning faculties, Exceptional responsiveness—"Average" children—Nervous children—Unimpressionable children—Sulky children—Mischievous children—Passionate children—Training is a matter of insight rather than restriction

It has been said that we are all born original, but all die copies. In one sense this is true, though it is not the whole truth. We are "all born original" in the sense that we are all born different, capable of being ourselves and no one else. But some are born with a big self, so to speak, one in many respects so different from the other selves around, that they feel, from the start, in conflict with the world in which they live. Others are less conscious of the strength of their own individuality, they are not so intensely aware of the clash between their impulses and desires, and outward circumstances; it is easier for them to work in harmony with others. Some are actually wanting in individuality, so that they act too readily on the suggestion of another self, they possess too little initiative. "We all die copies," in the sense that we must all, to a certain extent, reflect in our characters the influences to which we have been subject; but weaker natures merely reflect and do no more, they reflect exactly what they receive. Strong natures only reflect what they have thoroughly absorbed, and modified according to their special character.

Now, *this individuality must be recognized and understood.* It is a highly complex product, and we need

more than mere vague observation, however sympathetic, before we can attempt to estimate the fundamental differences between different types of character. Wherein lies the difference between different children? Why is one child so delightful to deal with and another so difficult and trying? Why is one lad so full of mischief, another so passionate and headstrong, another so dreamy that he gets into difficulties at every turn? Why is one so responsive, another so self-centred? one so independent, another so dependent? Are the differences between different children so great and so fundamental that the more we study them, the more we are driven back to the conclusion that all children are unique, that the similarity between them is hardly worth mentioning, and any classification according to "type" unreal? I think not. The more we observe their fundamental differences, the more clearly do we grow to recognize their deep and even more fundamental similarities. Our grouping may be vague and indefinite, for natural groups have no sharp lines of demarcation. Children, who appear by nature to belong to one class, may, as the result of training, or as the result of inherited tendencies which show themselves at a later stage of development, pass out of this class into another. Some children appear to belong equally to more than one class, for natural groups, as Sir F. Galton has aptly expressed it, have centres but no border lines. But there are undoubtedly certain natural and familiar groups, certain distinct types of character in childhood. The very language, which we habitually use in speaking of the children, referring to them as clever, strong-willed, excitable or responsive, implies on our part an underlying, though unconscious, classification.

What, then, are these fundamental natural groups?

1. Children in whom *strength of will and determination* is the most marked characteristic; generally speaking, these are more or less self-sufficient.

2. Those whose characters are determined by the

*strength of their emotions*—these may be depressing and show themselves in moodiness and taciturnity—or they may be exhilarating and show themselves in a joyous temperament. According as they belong to the one or the other category, children are reserved or expansive. In this emotional group, most artistic natures are found.

3. Those who are marked by the *keenness of their reasoning faculties*. Frequently, these exhibit strength of will in addition to keenness of mind, and, if lacking in emotion, they tend, in adult life, to become cold abstract thinkers.

4. Children who stand out, not so much on account of any marked strength of will, emotion or intellect, but on account of their *exceptional responsiveness*. These may also be emotional or discriminative, but, in childhood, they are only very occasionally self-determined. Such children, owing to their extreme responsiveness, are often very excitable.

5. Those whom we may call “*average*” children, who *do not exhibit any one quality in excess*. Sufficiently responsive to be readily trained, yet not lacking in will power, so as to be weak in the face of temptation, these children are comparatively easy to bring up.

6. Those who are *weak in some definite direction*—exceptionally nervous children, wanting in the power of self-control; “scatter-brained” children, lacking in the power of concentrating their attention; children wanting in will power or the capacity for affection, or persistently obstinate, because weak in reasoning power.

1. The first group of children, consisting of those whose most strongly marked characteristic lies in their strength of will and determination, includes two distinct sections. Some children, for instance, show their strength of will in *masterfulness*, in the instinctive desire to lead, to be in authority. Others, not necessarily masterful, show their will chiefly in the *tenacity* with

which they adhere to any purpose on which they have set their minds, overcoming all obstacles, one by one, in the attainment of their end. The strong purposive will is there, but the end which they have in view and for which they strive with such persistence, is not the attainment of mastery over their fellows, it may be even an abstract idea. This strength of will is needed to do the work of a Darwin. It is needed by great explorers, such as Nansen or Livingstone—but the will which enables such men to pursue an end, alone and unaided, is different from that which is bound to find its outlet in organizing and commanding—the will of a Duke of Wellington, a Gladstone or a Disraeli. The child, who can will to pursue an “end” with unflagging zeal, need not be masterful; but the born ruler of men is almost of necessity masterful as a child, and, in all probability, rebellious.

Geoffrey shows his determination in the way in which he can work steadily for a prize at school, giving up pleasures which come by the way for the sake of his work. He has no difficulty in finishing what he has begun, if he has ever cared about the making of it. He is not quarrelsome, not difficult to manage, as long as we are not opposing him in the purpose on which he has set his will. He has the strong will which shows itself in purposive action, but he does not desire to be a leader of others; he does not instinctively rebel against authority as such, if he can pursue his own ends uninterruptedly. He belongs to the group in which we place Huxley and Nansen, rather than Gladstone and the Duke of Wellington. He has the makings of a discoverer and a path-finder.

Contrast with Geoffrey, Duncan's strong masterful nature. He wants to rule rather than to be ruled, he only submits to authority because freedom can be found only within the limits of the law. He will not be “driven.” In early childhood, he was pugnacious, the mutual give and take of friendship came hardly to him. He was passionate and rebellious, until he had gained



self-control and learnt reasonableness. Until he learnt to put himself on the side of the law, he could not obey graciously. Peggy, too, is a child of this same type. "Did you say I was to go upstairs, den I just won't!" she said, when she was not yet four—yet she was able to obey comparatively readily if she were given a few seconds in which she could *think*, so that she had the chance of ordering herself, instead of being ordered. "Just wait, I'm thinking," she urged. "Now I've thought and I want to go upstairs." She must act upon her own initiative. "I don't want to be good," she says, when *told* to be good, and she will submit willingly to punishment in order to get her own way in "naughtiness." "I'll want to be good presently, but not yet. I'll tell you when" And so she waits quietly, till you hear her voice calling: "Now I'm ready to be good"; and good she is, when she chooses of her own accord.

"I hate to be *told* to do things and I hate to be copied, I like to be myself," was Robert's verdict, when he was nine years old. One morning, at breakfast, he was asked if he wished to drink his milk hot or cold. "What is Margaret going to have? I'll have the opposite," was his reply. But Margaret was of this same type and refused to say first. Things were at a standstill. At last she said to her brother: "If I promise to have something different from you, will you say first?" To that he agreed and chose cold milk, and she took hot. *She* had not yielded to his desire that she should say first; but *he* was also satisfied because he had not been copied!

Jack and Cuthbert, both aged seven, were thrown much together one term at boarding-school. Cuthbert was an old-fashioned little lad, an only child. "To begin with, Jack and I didn't get on at all well together," he explained to Jack's mother. "You see, he always wanted his way and I wanted mine, and so we quarrelled. I said I'd rather play by myself and the animals (a pet dog and cat), and he said he would too!"

Gradually, however, they began to "hit it off" a bit better, to be able to take turns in choosing (neither of them ever forgot when it was their turn), but they were always amusingly ready to be on the defensive. "I don't want to be always in the same place as Jack, and doing what he does!" was Cuthbert's remark, when they were sent off to play together. "I'm sure I don't want him to either," Jack chimed in!

2. The second group includes those whose characters are ruled by the strength of their emotions—moody and reserved, or joyous, expansive natures. "Sulky" children belong to this class; being over-sensitive, their feelings are readily hurt. When injured, they draw back, as it were, into themselves; "they draw the latch, sit by the fire, and spin," and their reserve is such that they give their neighbours no chance to enter in. For them, the capacity for self-expression must somehow be gained; as long as they hug their consciousness of injury in silence, such consciousness of injury grows. Their characters cannot develop, as they are capable of developing, till their natures expand, and, in the joy of expression, they lose their tendency to dwell within themselves.

In contrast to these, the joyous expansive natures stand out. Of these, Walt Whitman, as a boy, affords a striking example. Joyous and affectionate, though wilful and passionate; full of the keen zest for life, and possessing an unflagging capacity for fun and adventure; not a solitary child, though at intervals living apart in a world of emotion which none could share with him; a clever lad, full of ideas; brimming over with affection, in childhood as in manhood, for everyone around him. His was a nature strong in will power, strong in intellect, but the whole dominated by a strength of emotion, which is rarely paralleled.

Most artistic natures fall into this second group. Whitman is at the centre, a strongly marked harmonious character, strong in emotion, but also strong on all

other sides of his character. Amiel and Rousseau, though emotional like Whitman, and intensely sensitive to impressions, were, unlike him, lacking in initiative and in will power, and their experience in childhood served to deepen the emotional element of their nature, rather than to strengthen those intellectual and volitional elements wherein they were already lacking. Whitman had a wise mother, Rousseau and Amiel both lost their mothers in early childhood, and there was no one to correct their deficiencies. Lord Morley tells us that Rousseau, naturally dreamy and imaginative, as a small boy, sat up reading novels with his father night after night, the whole night through, both of them only recalled to the world of senses with the grey light of the dawn. Various bad impulses, which tempted him in his early boyhood, were permitted to develop unchecked, till, in later life, he became a slave to them.

Of Amiel's childhood, it would be intensely interesting to know more; to be able to trace the way in which a will, probably weak in boyhood, became gradually weaker through lack of use, until in manhood he could declare that practical life made him afraid. "To love, to dream, to feel, to understand—all these are possible to me, if only I may be dispensed from *willing*—I am always preparing but never accomplishing. I have too much imagination, conscience and penetration, and not enough character." He was a sensitive, impressionable boy of delicate health; disposed, even in childhood, to take a more or less dreamy view of life; and thoughtful beyond his years. All through his life he was extraordinarily receptive, capable of "effacing himself and his own individuality in the presence of the thing to be understood and absorbed." He accomplished little—had the early influences of his childhood been different, we may allow ourselves to ask, could not his weakness have been turned to strength?

Mr. A. C. Benson, the author of the "Upton Letters," gives an interesting study of the development of an

emotional and artistic temperament in his book, "Beside Still Waters." The boy in the book was self-centred and brooding during early childhood, possessing a rare capacity for appreciating Nature, weaving fancies round every tree and flower. He is untouched at first by any human affection. Gradually his sympathies developed in response to people around him; affection for others began to play a part in his life, and the love of Nature and the love of human beings developed side by side, the joy received from the one enhancing the joy received from the other. It is an interesting study in the psychology of the artistic temperament.

3. The third group consists of those who are marked by the keenness of their reasoning faculties. In the centre, we might place those who pass a childhood, such as is recorded of Clerk Maxwell, Spencer, Huxley, Sidgwick and others. Huxley, as a boy, "had an inquiring mind and a singularly early turn for metaphysical speculation." He read everything he could lay hands on in his father's library, and, when a boy of twelve, used to "light his candle before dawn, pin a blanket round his shoulders, and sit up in bed to read Hutton's 'Geology.'" An interesting glimpse of the child, who was father to the man, is given in a fragmentary journal begun when he was fifteen. "What have I done in the way of acquiring knowledge since January?" he writes in June, when sixteen years old, and he makes a list of projects begun and projects completed; then he adds, unconsciously revealing his character—"I must get on faster than this. I must adopt a fixed plan of studies, for unless this is done I find time slips away without knowing it, and let me remember this, that it is better to read a little and thoroughly, than cram a crude, undigested mass into my head, though it be great in quantity." In boyhood, as in manhood, his character was shown in a deep capacity for affection, a strong will, thoroughness, energy, keenness of interest, "not only in pure know-

ledge, but in human life," a passionate sincerity and a fearless love of truth.

Of Sidgwick's childhood, but little is recorded. He was fortunate in possessing a wise and sensitive mother, and his childhood was happy and uneventful. He was the inventive genius of the nursery and a general favourite, both at school and at home, from the gaiety and vivacity of his disposition. Exceptionally clever, an omnivorous reader, good at games in which intellectual rather than physical powers were required, he was a thoughtful, studious and receptive boy. His serene early life, free from passion and headstrong action, foretells the keen, but calm and steady, work of later years. His was a nature of deep emotion, of artistic sensibility, with a strong will to do whatever reason demanded, but dominated by his intellectual powers, governed by a love of truth and an untiring search after it.

Neither Huxley nor Sidgwick was lacking in emotion. It is, however, possible for children in this highly reasoning class to be so conspicuously lacking in emotion as to become, if this side of their nature is not developed, cold, abstract thinkers of the type of Herbert Spencer. His was a life entirely organized on a rational and scientific basis—"a kind of nightmare of an entirely rational world," writes Mr. Masterman. He was never able to lose himself in emotion. Even after his mother's death—his first grief—he could criticize and weigh his emotion. In early years, his feeling for children, he tells us, was "tepid"—a marked contrast to Huxley. In later life, however, when, in ill health, he decided to try whether the society of children might help him to kill time, he is surprised to find, as a result, the "philoprogenitive instinct" awakening within him. In his autobiography, he tells us that, one day in the train, he closely observed a man who was in terrible misery. "As I continued to contemplate the face," he writes, "and to understand all which its expression of distress meant, the pity excited in me went to the extent of

causing that constriction of the throat which strong feeling sometimes produces." The capacity for emotion was there, but never yielded to ; reason dominates and masters all.

This over-development of one side of a nature to the exclusion of others, Herbert Spencer himself puts down to a somewhat morbid ancestry. It may quite as likely be due to the incomplete home conditions surrounding his early life, so that the social impulses of his nature were not then called forth, and therefore failed him at a later stage, when he himself was wise enough to realize the need of them. He tells us that he had had a longing since boyhood to have his affections called out. "I have been in the habit," he writes, "of considering myself but half alive, and have often said I hoped to begin to live some day." That day never came, yet the desire shows that his was, not so much a nature lacking in emotional capacity, as one in whom the capacity was somehow or other never drawn out. Owing to our ignorance of the laws of heredity, we often put down to inheritance what may be due to early influences. It seems natural to one who writes his own autobiography to trace character to heredity alone, for he can see the developed characters of his elders ; but he cannot fully analyse the surroundings of his early childhood, and this makes him lose sight of the possibilities which lie hidden in his own character, even in spite of heredity, for becoming other than he did. "My friends see what I might have been," wrote Amiel, "I see what I am." The same is true of Spencer.

4. Exceptionally responsive children constitute the fourth group—wax to receive, but not always marble to retain. These may also be emotional or intellectual, but they are only very occasionally self-determined. Although this group of children stands apart from the others in this one respect, many of them are also either in the second or third group, strong in emotion or in intellect. Or they may be found among those who are

weak in some part of their nature—weak because they are too responsive—weak in the power of initiative—capable of response to impressions from without, but incapable of suggestions to action on their own part. Amiel was one of these extraordinarily receptive characters: Cowper, Rousseau, Walt Whitman, all were responsive beyond the ordinary.

Such exceptionally responsive children are easy to train if we only go to work in the right way, they are quick to catch on to our suggestions. But they need to develop a strong sense of right and wrong, a clear moral judgment—otherwise their very capacity for response may prove a drawback, when they leave the nursery for a bigger world where they can enjoy comparative freedom. Too responsive a character, if also too docile, takes shape readily and seems fit for life early, but breaks down when faced with difficulties and temptations. “Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel,” was the verdict of a father of such, who had not trained his children wisely, but had left them to develop unaided. Excessively responsive children are often unstable, readily thrown off their balance; yet they may acquire strength of character if only they can gain self-control. There is excessive response to our suggestions; we must therefore see that, bit by bit, they learn to rely upon themselves, to hold fast to their own ideas and not be carried away by ours. Responsiveness is good, but it must not be allowed to hide the need for independence of character.

5. What we may speak of as “average” children make up the fifth group. They are sufficiently responsive to ordinary influences to be teachable, they are not lacking in will power, but they do not possess any strongly marked characteristic, such as great strength of will, high emotional or intellectual capacity. Such children constitute the great majority. If they remain in this class throughout their later life, they will not do the pioneer work in the world; but many of them become reliable, trustworthy, helpful

characters, fitting into their rightful groove in the whole social structure, not chafing at drudgery and at the pretty restrictions of daily life, as the more marked characters may tend to do, but making life altogether, for the majority of us, an easier and more cheerful business. As children, such individuals are easier to manage than those possessing more independent characters; they do not demand the same constant effort on the part of those in authority; they can appreciate and help the more original natures around, and by faithfully following in their lead, render the work of others more fruitful than it otherwise could be. Darwin tells us that if, in a flock, you find more than a certain number of leaders, in some way or other the flock suffers.

While we appreciate the leaders and allow for their development, we must then also see to it that every average child has his faculties sufficiently developed to enable him, as he grows older, to act with self-reliance and judgment, in those affairs of daily life in which he is called upon to act alone. He may never be a leader of many, but he should never be among the blindly led, who follow the leader when he is at fault.

All children can learn to be increasingly self-reliant; they can be taught to use their experience so as to increase materially their judgment, their powers of initiative, and their inventive capacity. At the start, they will often prefer that others suggest games or occupations, that others point out the line of duty. Gradually, with encouragement, they gain self-confidence, and even come to enjoy independence while they are still young, liking occasionally to lead rather than to follow. Grown-up people are often too ready to advise, too little aware of the loss of experience to the child, when he leans too much on others. "To be cast on our own resources is to be thrown into the lap of luxury," the late Sir William Jenner used to say. To develop the best in the



children, they must combine responsiveness with self-dependence.

6. One group of children only is left—those who are weak in some definite direction. I do not mean those who are definitely lacking in intelligence, in a full equipment of perceptive faculties, whose training is recognized to be a special matter; but those who, normal in most respects, yet need particular care, in order to gain their complete and full development. They may be exceptionally nervous children, or weak in the power of concentrating their attention; they may be children failing to manifest affection, or weak in will power; or persistently obstinate, because lacking in the capacity of sufficiently utilizing their reason. How can such defects be remedied?

What of the nervous child? Wherein lies his weakness and his strength? How can we help him to be the best which is in him? Such a child is full of unknown terrors—of trains, or of dogs; of bands of music; of strange sights and sounds.

"Will you take care of me, Mother, and not let any animals come and bite me in the night?" asked Morris each night, when he was three and a half.

Austen, when he was three years old, went to see a travelling circus, but, when in the tent, refused to take off his hat. His mother, finding the big sailor hat in the way while holding him on the seat, pressed for it to come off. "Are you sure the elephants won't bite off my head?" he asked.

Malcolm, when he was five, was staying at the seaside, and by chance heard some one speak of the incoming tide. He asked what "tides" meant, and afterwards, for two or three days, he dared not leave his nurse's side lest the sea should come up suddenly and overwhelm him! No explanation could subdue his fears.

Such children are often readily thrown off their

mental balance, not only under the influence of pleasurable excitement, but from lesser causes. The order of development of their mental qualities is irregular. They may, or may not, be naturally passionate, but they are readily hysterical, and their laughter may suddenly turn to tears. Unstable temperaments—yet often strong characters, when they have gained self-control—how can we deal with them? The cause of such a temperament is to be found in the extreme sensitiveness and lack of stability of their nervous systems in early childhood. This is frequently connected with physical delicacy—delicacy, which is often with care outgrown. The child's bodily system must be carefully built up and strengthened, his nervous system steadied, both directly and indirectly—directly, by insistence on self-control; indirectly, by the avoidance of undue excitement, by steady, quiet, loving discipline invariably maintained, by an ordered routine of life, and by long hours of rest and sleep. There is excessive power of imagination; if we provide healthy food for the imagination of such children, they will be less likely to create for themselves unknown terrors. Let them learn about animals, flowers and the world around them, let us tell them good and happy stories, around which, when they are tired at night, their imagination can play fearlessly. Gradually we can help their characters to grow stronger—and their timidity and excitability will pass away with greater experience, and the gaining of health and self-control. We shall be able to help such children by a wise interference; whereas neglect, or unwise interference, would have resulted in the harm being perpetuated.

Perhaps one of the most difficult types of children to train is the child who is unimpressionable, not because he is in any way stupid, impervious to impressions from without, but because he is extraordinarily lacking in the power of concentrating his attention. The will-power of such a scatter-brained

child develops very slowly. Though his knowledge of right in early childhood may be fair, his capacity for doing the right, when his impulses are drawing him in the opposite direction, remains weak beyond the ordinary, because he lacks the power of focussing his attention on what he knows he ought to do. Plenty of capacity for feeling, thought and will may be latent; but the power of application, of concentration, is lacking. Combined, may be, with a strong belief in himself and considerable obstinacy, there is a weakness of will, as far as any power to be trusted goes—all because he lacks this power of paying attention. Like R. L. Stevenson's donkey, who accompanied him on his travels through the Cevennes, he insists upon moving forward on the path of virtue at his own slow pace! Now and again, as with the donkey, Modestine, something, or someone, may serve to quicken him for a time, but he soon relaxes. Such children are often very charming, with their dainty baby ways, but they are difficult to train—they test the patience and perseverance of those responsible for their upbringing beyond all others—they are so slow to learn by experience. Day after day we persevere, teaching them obedience, perhaps by counting "one, two, three," having warned them that if they do not respond before we say "three"—in some way they will suffer. They always do suffer—yet, time after time, they still wait until after we have said "three" before they yield! But one day we count, "one, two—" and, to our surprise and pleasure, the child responds. We know that we have moved on just one step.

There is nothing to be done with such children but gradually to cultivate their powers of attention and deepen their natures all along the line. Let them play at drill, at soldiers, etc., send them easy messages and see that these are delivered accurately, make them do little tasks day by day which require finishing, and see that these are done well—a few years' training

in the habit of attention will produce a marked change. Cultivate and deepen their affections by insisting that emotion must result in action. As they grow older, we must never be satisfied with their second best. Gradually cultivate in them those habits which require concentration—dressing and undressing, tidying away their toys, etc. The rate of development may be slow, but the difficulty is one which can be conquered and is well worth the conquering.

Sulky children also belong to this group. What can we do for them? We can deliberately cultivate their spontaneity, their power of self-expression, their capacity for seeing the point of view of other people—at the same time that we prevent the habit of sulkiness from growing by avoiding unnecessary opposition. Self-expression in one direction will help to make self-expression in other directions easier. Let the child draw, mould with clay, make designs in his painting, try to write stories and tell tales as he grows older. We can stimulate his power of suggestion by encouraging his inventiveness in games. Gradually his nature will open out, he will become more spontaneous, less self-conscious, too happy in the enjoyment of his gradually developing powers to brood over difficulties. Perhaps, above all, we can train him to express his affection and cultivate such affection. A child with a loving nature, sensitive to the appreciation and feelings of others, is rarely, if ever, sulky. He must enjoy the companionship of other children, and learn to do for others—love grows by giving and doing more than by receiving—we can supply him with motives to action outside himself. He must learn self-control. Gradually, very gradually, his nature will develop, and he will grow into a juster appreciation of his own rights relatively to others, into a capacity for expressing his difficulties instead of dwelling on them. But the change is gradual, and can only be accomplished by indirect means—it is no good question-

ing or arguing with a sulky child—he *wants* to “draw the latch,” he does not want us to come in.

Another type of child, difficult to deal with and often particularly trying, is the mischievous child—we need to remind ourselves constantly that he may be “an ugly duckling” who will grow up, like the ducklings in Hans Andersen’s story, into a swan! The child who never gets into mischief, who never does anything he ought not to do, may be so “good,” because he has not enough inventive capacity to think of mischief! and he may be equally lacking in original ideas in other directions. Such a child will not make any mark in the world as he grows up, and may prove weak in the face of temptation, because he is not quick-witted enough to see a way out. The mischievous child is full of original ideas, which he carries out without due thought for their ultimate effect, without due consideration for the rights of others. He must learn control, but his inventive capacity should be turned to good account.

Mrs. Bryant refers to this type of child in her essay on “Ugly Ducklings.”

“Let me not be misunderstood to imply,” she writes, “that we grown-up people are to lay down our comfort or convenience and allow young ‘Mischief’ to ride rampant over us, consoling ourselves with the reflection that mischief is liveliness turned wrong side out, and that it will turn right some day. Perhaps it will not. We are no more to leave it alone, than we are to deal with it by trying to quench the life and spirit which are its positive sources. We are to deal with it, so far as we can, by quickening those sources of thought and feeling, the deficiency of which is its negative cause; and, for this, strict measures, as well as gentle, may sometimes be necessary.”

What is involved in the lack of control shown in a child’s passionate outbreaks? Do these mean that the child is merely self-indulgent and wishes to have

his own way? Or do they mean that he is born with a hatred of external authority, with a strong will which he feels impelled to exercise freely—but that he has yet to gain the experience of life which will make his strong will also reasonable, which will teach him consideration for the rights of others equally with his own? If so, he only desires to govern himself, before he has the requisite knowledge to be capable of so doing; and such a desire should be respected, though it would be unwise to impose no restrictions. The strength of will is good, the desire for self-government is good; but wisdom must first be gained. We need then to watch carefully to discover the cause of these passionate outbreaks and to see how they can be cured.

If the child has a strong individuality of his own, we must, first of all, see to it that the cause of his passion does not lie in our method of dealing with him. We may have increased his natural tendency to rebellion by frequent, irritating checks to his self-will, by the constant assertion of our personal will as such. Or we may have been unreasonably harsh, trying to break the child's will, instead of bringing it into harmony with our own. Or we may have been hasty and unjust. The tendency to a passionate mood may, or may not, be there—but in any case, we have made the tendency greater. What, then, can be done? How is the lack of control to be remedied?

In the first place, self-control can only be acquired when there is quiet, even discipline; this must be sympathetic, entering into the child's life and difficulties, but unemotional. The laws restricting the child's freedom must be as unvarying and impersonal as the laws of Nature. Under such circumstances, he knows that he might as well beat his head against a brick wall, as try to get his own will, when it is contrary to discipline. Moreover, within the limits of the law, he finds freedom, the freedom for which he longs.

In the second place, our action in dealing with such

children must be unhesitating. We must not let them see that we find it difficult to make up our mind, even should our decision turn out to be wrong; for the child's sake, we need to decide at once.

Norman, aged four, a rebellious and passionate little lad, one night, after tea, wanted to go out for a walk with his father. It was nearly bedtime, and as he was generally only too ready for bed, his mother felt that a walk at that time might be too much for him. On the other hand, his father and he were such chums, it was such a treat for them to be together, the weather was beautiful, and being late once in a way might do no harm. So she hesitated, anxious to do the right. The mere hesitation, the possibilities the doubt opened out, of joy on the one hand, and disappointment on the other, were too much for Norman. He began to agitate to be allowed to go, showing at once by his behaviour that the going was distinctly undesirable. When his mother decided against the walk, the storm of passion was terrible, such a storm as would never have occurred, had refusal been given at once.

It is an old saying that "children and fools should never see things half made"—neither should passionate children such as these see a decision in the making. We must decide promptly and unwaveringly, there must be no change of plans.

Thirdly, when the child has done wrong, we must see that our punishment is not too heavy; we must look at the punishment from the child's point of view, so as to realize whether it will appear just to him. Apparent injustice is certain to result in passion.

On one occasion, Stephen, between four and five, had been, so he thought, taking care of his mother, who was ill in bed, and he had been greatly impressed with the responsibility of his position. All the morning he had kept very quiet, fetching little things that were wanted, etc. In the afternoon, while his mother was sleeping, he was in the nursery. There he behaved so badly—possibly as a result of being so abnormally

good and quiet before—that his nurse said he could not go into his mother after tea, he would have to go straight to bed instead. His disappointment was great, but mingled with that was his sense of responsibility. Mother expected him to take care of her, who would look after her if he did not go? Thoughts of undue anxiety expressed themselves in his hysterical passion. Injustice, more than anything else, rouses feelings of rebellion in such a child.

Fourthly, we should not oppose a strong-willed child, unless it is necessary; avoid provocation and controversy wherever possible. In the case of the tiny child, we can turn his thoughts in some other direction. The watchful mother or nurse can tell by various signs when an outburst of temper is at hand. They can avoid as far as possible the kind of occasion which produces them; and when the storm is preparing—before it comes to a head, that is, before the child has been “naughty”—they can send him on some message, talk about something else, use their ingenuity to distract his attention, and the storm may blow over. This is often both possible, and advisable, while the child is very young: “The thing that [then] really matters is that he shall do the right thing in the right way, eat his supper, put on his clothes, go to bed, not lose his temper.”<sup>1</sup> But the time comes when the child will know that he is being managed; when, too, the strength and persistence of his desires are such that he cannot be so diverted—then it is too late so to manage him. But he should, by that time, have learnt much self-control and for the most part be able to manage himself. If we avoid rousing his passionate impulses unnecessarily, he will only occasionally show his passion. At such times, we must help him to understand that the wrongness of the action consists in his loss of control and that loss of control renders him unfit to take his proper place in the home common-wealth. Arbitrary punishment cannot meet the difficulty.

<sup>1</sup> “Thought-turning,” by Dr. Helen Webb.



If the passion be due to a strong uncontrollable force of will within the child, that strong will is good ; it must be fostered and developed ; it must be brought under the control of reason ; it must be brought into harmony with the other wills around it. This is a gradual process. The child can be taught self-control in many ways—in eating and drinking, in endurance of pain, in the bearing of disappointment, in consideration for others, in his personal habits, in his personal expenditure. And, all the while, he must be conscious that we are governed by reason in our dealings with him ; he must be helped to understand why he was wrong, when he desired wrongly ; his will must be respected and given scope and opportunity for action.

Whether the defect of character lies in a lack of control over passion, an undue intensity of feeling, which knows not how to express itself, an uncontrolled imagination, or a lack of the power of concentrating attention, we can do much by an understanding of the difficulty ; even though, in the matter of treatment, no definite laws can be laid down, even though there is no golden rule for obtaining full development of character. But, perhaps, if we realize this one fact, that training is a matter of insight rather than restriction, we have gained the one thing needful—a deep consciousness that we must ever try to understand. To the children's inner natures, as to the plants, " gifts and powers are given, each different from each ; each good in its kind ; each, if rightly carried out, bearing its part in the full perfection of the kingdom which is boundless, the plan which is harmony." It seems to be part of that plan that we, of an older generation, should help the younger, by education and training, to become " the best after their kind." Study is needed, and the fruit of patient study lies in the slow gaining of confidence—a confidence which works hand in hand with humility—yet a confidence which we need, lest, in an exaggerated sense of our own unworthiness, we shirk so great a task.

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## CHAPTER XIII

### AN INDICTMENT OF ARBITRARY PUNISHMENT IN THE EARLY TRAINING OF CHILDREN

One of the natural consequences of the conclusions to which we have arrived in the preceding chapters is that the words "naughty" and "punish" ought to be ruled out of our nursery vocabulary. "If you do that again, I shall *punish* you," or "You are a very naughty child and you will have to be *punished*," we say—to the child who annoys us by being disobedient; who, interested in what is going on, dawdles behind out of doors; who runs across the road, heedless of traffic; who steps in the gutter; who, by the merest accident or intent on mischief, breaks an ornament or spills the ink; who, forgetting the baby is asleep, gives a shrill cry as his train enters an imaginary tunnel; who repeatedly pulls off his gloves or bites the strap as he sits in the perambulator; and so forth. All the actions we grown folk choose to term "naughty" we hold to be punishable. Unfortunately, these two words "naughty" and "punish" are so often used, and with such varying meaning, that all the child gathers is a vague feeling that he is doing something which grown folk do not like, and for the doing of these things he has to suffer! He gains no clear judgment of right and wrong. Some of the actions we punish are morally wrong, others are not; some are permitted by some people and punished by other people; certain actions we occasionally even permit ourselves and, at other times, punish—when, from the child's point of view, we are "in a bad temper." Time after time, we merely reprimand an action, and, suddenly, without any warning, we visit it with punishment.

So indifferently do we use these two words "naughty" and "punish" that the child receives no real training

in moral education as the result of the punishments he suffers. Goodness and badness, rewards and punishments, only seem to him the outcome of arbitrary caprice. The words "dog," "horse," "train," "mother," etc., have a clear and definite meaning for him. The facility and accuracy with which he learns about the various "objects" in the world about him, largely depend, as we have seen, upon our accurate use of language in our conversation. In matters of conduct, this clearness is lost. There is nothing in connection with the understanding of conduct and behaviour from which the child suffers so much as the vagueness of thought and language on the part of grown people. Carelessly correcting and carelessly punishing, we make it far harder than it need be for the child to adjust his actions to the claims of the society of which he is a member. The complete ruling out of the use of the words "punish" and "naughty" in all our dealings with the child, would drive us back upon the necessity for clearer thinking on our part, and a more discriminating use of language. In an atmosphere of clearer thought, the child's mind could grow.

But it is not only our unthinking use of these words which hinders the growth of the child's moral understanding: our unthinking and haphazard use of punishment itself as a means of controlling the child's behaviour is an even greater hindrance to his moral development—the more so because, when we punish, we ourselves are generally vexed or angry. *Anger in the person punishing generally calls forth anger, resentment or fear, in the child punished. Emotion clouds the understanding of both the one who punishes, and the one who is punished.*

"When I was punished as a child," a nurse writes, "I remember thinking to myself, 'Well, she's in a good old temper, and I shan't say I'm sorry.'" Florence, seven years old, sent out of the room in disgrace by an aunt, who "seemed to love punishing her," vented her feelings by upsetting the contents of a work-

basket all over the floor, and unrolling the reels of cotton to increase the mess! Lionel was three years old. Put to bed by an angry nurse for tearing his clothes, he managed to pull all the bedclothes and the mattress off on to the floor. When his nurse went to get him up, he was sitting upon the springs! "There," he said angrily, "I shall do that every time you put me to bed!" The nurse, even more angry, re-made the bed and again left him, telling him that he would have to stay where he was without any dinner for being so "naughty." When she went back to him a second time, he had managed to bite a large hole in the sheet! "There, now you will have to mend that as well as my clothes," he shouted at her.

"You're mad with me because I'm mad, and all the time you're just as mad yourself," was the boy's angry, and probably just, retort. If it be true—as commonly alleged—that if we waited to punish till we ceased to be angry, we should never punish at all, must not punishment stand condemned at the outset?

Yet, even if we could so discipline ourselves that we never punished a child other than calmly and deliberately, never punished unless we had warned him beforehand, I venture to claim that full enquiry will lead punishment, as commonly understood, to stand condemned as a means of obtaining good conduct, since its success—when it is successful—depends upon rousing the instinct of fear, and fear undermines a child's confidence.

"I've found a splendid way of getting Thomas to go to sleep quickly," writes a nurse. "You know how he loves his Teddy bear? I have told him that, unless he goes to sleep at once, he shall not have his Teddy bear in the morning!" Thomas was two and a half. What motive urged him to keep down quietly under the bedclothes till he fell asleep? None other than the *fear* lest he should lose his much-loved Teddy.

Gordon was five, and unusually selfish. His nurse

wanted to cure his selfishness. His favourite toy, she said, was an engine. When one day he greedily snatched a toy from his younger brother, she decided that the engine should be taken away and placed on the top of the nursery cupboard, and remain there, as an object lesson and reminder, until he had learnt to share all his toys with his brother. For four whole days, he was obstinate and sulky over the loss of the engine. On the fifth day, he went to her and said "Gordon will give Eric his *bricks* to play with" "That's a good boy. But will you also let Eric have the engine sometimes?" she asked; and, in passion, he shouted, "No, no!" For three more days the engine remained in his sight, but out of his reach. Then, at last, he yielded—what else could he have done? With a very determined face he went to his nurse, "Nurse," he said, "give Gordon his engine, Eric wants to play with it too." After that he shared his toys.

For more than a week, Gordon had evidently lived in an atmosphere of anger and resentment, caused by the arbitrary taking away of his most cherished possession—anger and resentment, which had no chance of becoming dissipated because, though out of his reach, the engine was kept in his sight. The arbitrary power, which the grown person was able to exercise, in the end—naturally—proved too strong for him, and he yielded. Had he held out longer, he would know it was within the bounds of possibility that he would lose his engine altogether. The motive, then, which prompted him to yield was *fear*, lest the punishment should continue or increase; it could not be any desire on his part to give pleasure by sharing. For long afterwards, the nurse herself remained satisfied with the result of her treatment, but was there sufficient justification for that satisfaction? Even one such experience as Gordon's would be enough to lay the foundation of a "buried complex" of antagonism to all authority, as the result of the particular authority thus harshly exercised.

Those who study the functional nervous diseases of

grown folk are more and more tracing them to early "repressions", caused by or connected with fear and punishment during childhood. Many unexplained faults are traceable to the indirect and unexpected result of some early fear. A child may lie because he is full of fear, or he may be boastful or aggressive because he is full of fear, or he may steal, to find some means of hiding his sense of inferiority, first aroused by fear. He may be dreamy and forgetful, at home or at school, because he is indulging in day-dreams in order to compensate for his fears. In many children, fear occupies so large a part in their emotional life, that it is only too readily awakened, even by minor occurrences. "Of course, you're not afraid of Daddy?" a doctor questioned, trying to find the cause for the child's nervous fears. "A bit," was the child's reply, "he hits me sometimes—not often." "Well, I'm quite sure you're not afraid of Mother," the doctor continued, in a confident tone. Again the child hesitated, then: "Just a little," he said, "Mother hits me sometimes, too." "Only when I am naughty though," he added, in justice to his mother.

When grown folk punish sensitive children in order to obtain better behaviour, they often do not, for one moment, realize that they are relying upon the repressive effect of fear. The child does not *tell* us that he is afraid of us: he simply ceases to confide in us. A certain amount of reserve inevitably enters into the child's attitude towards grown folk as he grows older, but if we give him no cause to fear us, the greater part of his thoughts would still be freely expressed. We cannot understand him, and therefore cannot help him, unless he can freely express himself.

In no part of our life with the children is criticism, then, more necessary than in this matter of punishment. Yet how rarely do we question our right to punish—even our right to slap and to whip: how rarely do we consider the ultimate effect of our punishments, upon ourselves and upon the child. How frequently it is said—

"If a child cannot be encouraged to obedience, he must be forced to it by *punishment*." We believe that "the child must be brought to see that our will is stronger than his own"; "we believe that we are right to *punish* direct disobedience," lest the habit of disobedience should grow "If a child is really naughty, he ought to be *punished*." "We must teach him that he has to do as his nurse tells him, and if he does not, he must be *punished*." "*Punishment* is quite a necessary thing in the upbringing of children. Both mother and nurse know that the child will grow up self-willed and naughty if he is not *punished*, because right must be known from wrong, and, without *punishment*, children so easily forget." Such statements manifest a complete lack of understanding of the instincts of child nature, yet they are made by intelligent mothers and nurses. As long as better outward behaviour is the immediate outcome of punishment, such punishment is held to have been justified, and all is considered well. If the immediate outcome of punishment is *not* better behaviour, it is often enough only regarded as a proof that further and more drastic punishment is required! Yet, with some children, the more we punish, the more the child continues to offend—"to get even with us." Even when good behaviour is obtained by punishment, it can be obtained at too great a cost. We forget that good behaviour is not the same thing as goodness. We are too easily content if our children are well-behaved, and forget that they may appear good because they find it "pays," or because they have been cowed into obedience. Moreover, many so-called "good" children are simply wanting in will-power, in which case their apparent "goodness" is only a sign of weakness; or they may be hiding the desires which they still feel, waiting until they are old enough to rebel successfully against the authority to which they are now forced to submit, in order to escape punishment.

In our whippings and punishments of small children, we manifest a lack of initial understanding of child

nature ; and, by the deepening of fear and constraint in the child. by our whippings and punishments, we close the door to our further understanding. Moreover, we exhibit a lack of faith in human nature when we punish, for we only punish because we are fear-driven ourselves. We are *afraid* to let our children make mistakes in behaviour, lest unsatisfactory actions should develop into unsatisfactory habits. We are *afraid* to trust to the universal power which compels by its "persuasive influence" and we take what we believe to be a "short cut" to goodness by way of punishment. *Not the doing of wrong but the failure to learn what is right and to desire what is right · this is what we should fear for our children.* If, as the result of customary methods of punishment, the children share their toys because they know they will be punished if they do not share them ; if they obey because they would be whipped for disobedience ; if they tell the truth because they will be punished when they tell a lie—that is, if they do what is right in order to escape the physical suffering which would follow the doing of the wrong, then we are missing the goal at which we aim, for we are laying the foundations of the child's character upon the basis of self-interest.

Moreover, there are other reasons for condemning punishment besides the fact that they call forth and strengthen many undesirable motives in the child. Many—perhaps the majority—of the actions which are habitually punished are really due to our lack of insight, and our own incapacity for understanding the child. Sometimes the child is punished when the motive behind his action was good, and we lacked the insight to discern it. Sometimes he is punished merely because he is annoying us—maybe by the active interest he is taking in something which is not, in our opinion, his concern ; or by the repeated questions with which he is "bothering" us when we are busy, tired or pre-occupied ; and so forth. Sometimes we are vexed



for some cause which has nothing whatever to do with the child, and we vent our vexation upon him in the form of punishment. Sometimes we deal with him so tactlessly that we drive him into misbehaviour. At times he humiliates us by flouting our authority, possibly in the presence of other people, and our hurt pride leads us to punish him with greater severity. *To punish the child for failure in ourselves is not acting fairly towards the child.*

Brenda, four and a half years old, was punished for watering the ferns with milk. "They must be tired of vat nasty brown stuff," which she had seen Nurse pour over them out of the teapot, was the child's thought. Eileen, about the same age, was punished for spilling water when she was trying to water the ferns on the landing. She had just overheard her mother say she wished she had time to water the ferns herself, but she was too busy. The child's only desire had been to help, but her spilling the water over the polished floor was noted, and the motive of her action not considered, so she suffered in consequence.

May, five years old, rebelled rudely and repeatedly over having her hands and face washed, and sulked all through tea. One afternoon, her mother, desiring to discover the cause of her misbehaviour, came into the nursery shortly before tea-time, and, as soon as signs of tea appeared, went into the bathroom to wash her own hands. May followed unasked. In the bathroom, wonderingly, she questioned: "Do Mummies have to wash for tea as well as little girls?" When she understood that Mummies did, she *wanted* to wash herself; but Nurse's quick command, "Now, you dirty girl, come and be washed for tea," had awakened angry resentment.

Frank had wheeled his muddy wheelbarrow out of the garden into the conservatory, which adjoined the living room. To test the effect of his manner of insistence upon the child, his father said sharply, "Take that dirty wheelbarrow back into the garden at once, Frank! Just look at the mess you are making." Irri-

tated by the tone of his father's voice, Frank replied with an angry refusal. Deliberately leaving the matter over for a time, his father said nothing. In a little while, speaking in the reasonable tone which we should use in addressing another grown-up person, "Frank," he said, "you wouldn't bring a dirty wheelbarrow into a nice, clean room, would you?" "No, Daddy," replied the little lad—and wheeled it out!"

When May was punished for her rebellion, if Frank had been punished in the first instance for disobedience, whose would have been the fault? Our sharp, commanding tone *tempts* a child to be rude and disobedient: we have ourselves been "rude" to the child in the first place. If we treated children with the same respect, the same degree of consideration, which we accord to grown-up people, if we relied upon them as reasonable beings, they would behave as such. Life in the nursery would then run more smoothly than it does, and the question of punishment would rarely enter in.

In "The Human Machine," Arnold Bennett makes use of an apt analogy. He imagines that, having bought a motor-car, we start driving it, with no knowledge of the mechanism of the car, nor of the proper method of handling it. Finding the machine beyond our power to control, we blame the machine, which, we say "will not" go round corners properly, "will not" go up hills, and so forth. The verdict passed upon us in such a case would be that we were mad! Each one of us, he continues, is attempting to drive an intricate mechanism which we call "ourselves," without the least knowledge of the working of that mechanism. Those of us who are parents, nurses or teachers, also undertake the control of other and smaller mechanisms, which we call "children"—mechanisms equally elaborate, even more quickly responsive to the hand upon the wheel, even more easily upset in their working if anything is out of order with the machinery. When our own "mechanisms" refuse to work as they should, we make excuses for ourselves; when these smaller,

more sensitive "mechanisms" get out of hand, we blame and punish!

Some wrong actions are, however, the expression of a wrong impulse within the child. Can punishment, in such a case, effect a cure? Punishment can deter a child from *doing* that which is wrong, it cannot prevent him from *wanting* to do it. Punishment can never turn a child from a love of wrong to a love of right.

What is wrong with these so-called "naughty" children—it is better to call them "difficult"—the mischievous, sulky, obstinate, passionate, untruthful, bullying children and the rest?

*The wrong-doer is sick in spirit: his spirit must be restored to health.* In cases of physical ill-health, diagnosis precedes treatment: quack "remedies," warranted to cure all illnesses, are only resorted to by ignorant people. It is realized that understanding is essential. If the case is obscure, a tentative treatment is often adopted, which is based upon the partial nature of our understanding. In such a case, the treatment is watched with special care, in order that it may be modified, in any way which should prove advisable as the result of fuller understanding. There is surely no reason why moral ill-health—so-called "naughtiness"—should be dealt with in any other way. If a cure is to be wrought, suitable treatment, based upon complete understanding, is equally essential.

The mischievous child is strong in imagination and inventive capacity, but *lacks* due consideration for the rights of others, a due realization of the ultimate effect of his mischievous actions. This lack in him is the cause of the difficulty, but his vivid imagination can be made use of to develop his understanding, and he can be taught to exercise self-control. The sulky child possesses strong emotions, but he is self-centred—that is, he *lacks* the power to get out of himself and project his thoughts and sympathies into the life of others—and he also readily loses, under the stress of emotion, his

capacity for self-expression. That is why he sulks. But both his sympathy, and his power to express his thoughts in word and action, can be deliberately cultivated. He will then learn to express his difficulties and overcome them, instead of dwelling upon them. The obstinate child possesses a strong will, which refuses to yield, or only yields after much suffering, but he generally *lacks* either the power to listen to reason, or the power to understand. Special care, then, needs to be taken that his reasoning faculties should be provided with opportunities for development. The passionate child is strong in his desires, capable of becoming strong in will-power, but *lacks* the power of self-control, and his tendency to passion gives him little chance of understanding. There are numberless indirect ways in which his power of self-control can be strengthened, meanwhile we shall be careful to avoid rousing his anger. The child, who is physically cruel, may be expressing an intense curiosity, or a strong desire for self-assertion: but he *lacks* understanding and sympathy. Nothing can be gained by the attempt merely to repress, by punishment, his curiosity or self-assertion. His impulses must be provided with another and more serviceable outlet, and his understanding and sympathy must be developed.

In every case of "difficult" children, there is something lacking, some weakness which needs strengthening or some impulse for which another outlet must be found. The child, who bullies, has a strong will which he is impelled to use in commanding others: it is expressed crudely and harshly, because of his *lack* of sympathy, *lack* of understanding of other people's needs. The untruthful child may possess so vivid an imagination that he confuses the creation of his fancy with reality, and *lacks* the power to distinguish between them; or his vivid imagination may intensify the sense of shame, of hurt pride or of fear, which he knows he will feel when his wrong-doing is discovered, and he *lacks* the control, which alone could help him to confess and face the consequences.

*Since punishment cannot sublimate desire, cannot strengthen weakness, cannot supply a lack, then, as a method of training "difficult" children, it stands condemned.*

We now come to an entirely different use of the word punishment, which, though dealing with treatment of misbehaviour in a way outwardly resembling the process of arbitrary punishment, which we have condemned, differs from it so widely, as to need more than the mere omission of the word "arbitrary" to describe the processes involved. These processes involve, not only a mutual understanding between the child and the parent, but also an active desire on the part of the child, to overcome a definite habit, of which, in his better moods, he no longer approves, but which he feels powerless to overcome.

*There are occasions on which the child realizes that nothing but the infliction of physical pain can help him to change his wrong desire into right desire.* When there is a very close understanding and sympathy between parent or nurse and child—when the knowledge of a conflict between right and wrong impulses has been awakened within the child—when he is conscious that his stronger impulse towards wrong overcomes a weaker impulse towards right, and he himself desires that the weaker impulse should be strengthened and the stronger impulse weakened—then he himself may realize the curative effect of physical pain.

Robert was only whipped three or four times in his whole life, but each time the whipping resulted in a radical change in his behaviour, and, for days afterwards, he treated the mother, who had whipped him, with a touching and affectionate deference—as if to show his gratitude to her, for having helped him to become his real and happy self. A rare whipping would bring about a similar change in Duncan, even when he was a little lad of three or four years old. After his mother had whipped him, he would throw his arms about her neck, sobbing out, "Mother, I am so sorry.

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Did it hurt *you* much ? ” Betty, when she was six, had terrible fits of passion, which it seemed impossible to cure. One day, after being shut for half an hour in the boxroom as a punishment, her mother went to ask her if she was ready to be good. The child replied that she “was not ready to be good, until her Daddy whipped her.” She asked him to whip her “very hard,” because then she “would feel better.” The child never cried when she was whipped: she calmly told her father when she had had enough. Whenever she felt “naughty,” she would ask to be whipped and, for weeks afterwards, was as good as gold !

Lewis, seven years old, had told an untruth at school. He was found out, and his teacher spoke to him seriously about it. The boy was distressed, and determined—next time he was tempted—to tell the truth. Three weeks later the same thing recurred. Again he was spoken to, but not punished. To his surprise and distress, he then found that he had not felt as badly when his teacher talked with him this second time, as he had done the time before—and he was afraid he might commit the same fault again. He was a sensitive little lad, anxious to do right. He confided in his mother. He asked her if she would cane him if he lied again, to help him to be brave. About a month or five weeks afterwards, the same thing happened. She caned him, and the difficulty was at an end.

*But, even in such cases as these, punishment must be a very rare event, and our very last resource, not the first weapon which we call to hand.* The customary relationship between the grown folk and the children, and the spirit in which the penalty is received and enforced, must be such that the grown person and the child are not estranged, but drawn into a still closer comradeship—even by means of the whipping—which was painful to *both*. Such rare whippings justify themselves, not merely because of their immediate, or even their ultimate, effect upon behaviour, but because they help the child to gain self-direction and to free himself from the dominance of his anti-social desires.

When we have ruled out arbitrary punishment as a proper method of dealing with wrong-doing, our alternative cannot be, however, the mere passing over of the offence. To ignore a child's wrong-doing is not acting fairly by him. It is our business to teach him, and he can only learn from his mistakes in conduct or behaviour, if he has the chance of seeing clearly the issue of his actions.

Harry, five years old, had scribbled on the freshly-scrubbed nursery table. "What a pity," was Nurse's comment. "Never mind. You didn't think what you were doing, did you? The marks will scrub off again. I'm afraid it will take you rather a long time, Sonnie, but it can't be helped, can it?" Harry was weary of scrubbing long before the table was clean—but no one had been angry with him, or had aroused his anger. His nurse felt sorry for him, because he had to spend his time in scrubbing when he could have been playing with the others. So she helped him to finish the last little bit—when his patience was beginning to wane—and he was grateful to her.

While their mother was busy upstairs, Frank and Willie made a slide along the kitchen floor with a fresh half-pound of butter! Several weekly pennies had to be sacrificed to pay for the wasted food. Mother and children together economized with jam so as to make up for the loss—and the cleaning of the floor, before it became safe to walk upon, took the two boys some time. But no one was vexed about it: Mother even understood the temptation and the fun of the slide! The wrong conduct was due to the boys not having *thought* before they carried out their brilliant idea. In the future, their mother knew that they would think, because they would understand.

Miss Harrison, in her "Study of Child Nature" tells the story of a friend of hers who, on returning home one day, found that her six-year-old boy had taken his younger brother to the waggon shop across the street, and they had smeared their aprons with the

waggon grease. " ' My first impulse was to whip the boy,' the mother said, ' because he knew better than to go ; but I thought I would try some other way of punishing him, and see if it would do any good.' So I said : ' Why, that's too bad. It will be rather hard for you to get the grease off, but I think I can help you, if you will get some turpentine Run to the drug store at the corner and buy a small bottle of it.' On his return, I had all ready for him, and showed him how to begin cleaning. In a few minutes, he said, ' Mother, this stuff smells horrible.' ' Yes,' I replied, ' I know it does, I dislike the smell of it very much, but I think you will soon get through.' So he kept on scrubbing till he had cleaned the aprons as well as he could. ' Well,' I said, as I helped him to put away the cleaning materials, ' I think you will be more careful about going to that shop another time.' ' You bet I will,' was the emphatic reply."

The phrase " making the punishment fit the crime " will no doubt be applied to one or all of these cases, but only as the result of confusion of thought, for the term 'punishment' is again used in a special sense which differs from the ordinary. The method adopted is positive training : we are giving the child the opportunity of learning the natural result of his actions. No blame is attached, no physical suffering or arbitrary deprivation is experienced, no arbitrary power is exercised.

There is a third form of misbehaviour to be considered —the child's little forgetfulnesses, little slacknesses, in which there is nothing *morally* at fault, yet which interfere with the smooth and happy running of the home, and make the gaining of good habits difficult for the child to acquire. Can mild punishment do any good in these cases ?

We must first consider whether such failures in social orderliness and consideration for others are not, as a rule, as much our fault as the child's, since we are haphazard in the demands we make upon him as a member of the social community. *For a time*, we are



careful to see that he puts his books ready for school overnight, as soon as his lessons are finished ; then, in his haste to get to his game, he forgets to do it ; we either ourselves put them ready, or, leaving them as they are, we help him to collect them in the morning, lest he should miss his train. *For a time*, we insist that his bedroom should be left tidy in the morning, the bed-clothes thrown back, his night-garments neatly folded ; then he forgets ; either we say nothing about it, or we weary and annoy him by "nagging." The floor has been freshly scrubbed and polished, consequently, *for a time*, we are particular about his wiping his boots before he comes along the hall ; then, in a few days, we fail to notice whether he has wiped them or not. He lies in bed in the morning after he has been called : sometimes we appear not to notice ; at other times, we speak with considerable sharpness. In so many of the child's social duties, he forgets, and we fail to notice: there are faults on both sides.

As far as we ourselves are concerned, we need to see that the demands we make upon him are invariable, as well as reasonable—reasonable in themselves, and seen as reasonable by him. As far as the child is concerned—since social orderliness and consideration for others must become a habit, and since, when once understood and desired, the failure in individual instances is due merely to forgetfulness—the imposition of a small penalty, *as a help to remember*, is often beneficial. Such a penalty has no right to be regarded in the light of punishment. It is not imposed because the child needs to suffer as the result of having done wrong : it merely *helps him to remember*, in the same way as the entry in a notebook of the number of times he was "caught out" in cricket, as the result of a certain kind of stroke with his bat, would "help him to remember" the necessity for "hitting lower"! If certain, such penalties will need only to be very small. Exacted mechanically and good-humouredly, they will be paid good-humouredly and without resentment.

It is the constant "nagging" on the part of grown-up

people which he resents, because it continually forces upon his attention the existence of an external authority, to which he is obliged to submit. Exacted in the spirit of helping the child who wants to be helped, he will find such small penalties helpful—at home, as he would at school. Many a time, however, because of the point of view from which we are regarding his failures, we shall find some other way of helping him—or he will find another way of helping himself.

If small penalties, imposed in this way, are found to be ineffective as a "help to remember," or if the penalties are not good-humouredly accepted—then it is a sign that the trouble lies deeper than mere temporary forgetfulness. Either the child does not desire to fall in with the social order of the home, or he does not yet understand and appreciate the necessity for order. *Neither lack of desire nor lack of understanding can be met by the imposition of penalties, any more than by the imposition of punishment as customarily given.*

As soon as the normal child is old enough to understand, he becomes willing to co-operate with us in this matter of social discipline. If he is not normal, the same principles apply, though more thought would be required in planning the details, and more patience in awaiting the result.

We can ask the children—when some social offence has been several times repeated—"What are we going to do about it? What can you suggest to help you to remember?" According to English law, in the trial of all but minor offences, the "Counsel for the Crown" accuses; the jury, weighing the evidence, decides the guilt or innocence; the judge declares the sentence. "If we follow the plan, as a general principle," writes Dr. Hutchison, "of allotting to the child the dual rôle of judge and jury, while we act Counsel for the Crown, we shall find that he will carry out his own sentence, whatever form it may take, with an almost incredible willingness, and that it will be at the same time effective to a degree that we hardly dared to anticipate."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The Child and his Problems," by Dr. Hutchison.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE CHILD'S POINT OF VIEW

Importance of the right point of view in childhood—Its influence on later life—Our own influence over the child, both conscious and unconscious—His point of view, the result of his personal experience—Need on our part for recognition of, and respect for, his standpoint—His response to our sympathy and understanding—Variability in the child's outlook on life—Importance to him in early years of an ordered universe—Effect of temperament on outlook—Uncritical optimism of childhood—Predominance of feeling over reason—Predominance of self in early years—Conclusion.

It was Christmas Day, and the children were all gathered round the table for their Christmas dinner. The father took up the carving-knife to carve the turkey, all watching him eagerly; when, suddenly, he thought he would improve the occasion by telling the children about the events of the day. Solemnly he laid down the carver, and began to preach. The children's faces fell, the turkey was getting cold, they were excited and wanted their dinner. One by one, he asked them questions, even Mother began to fidget. But rebellion was rising in one little heart. When Nan was asked: "Do you know Who was born to-day, Nan?" "I don't know, and I don't care," she said, "I want my dinner! Daddy, when are you going to carve the turkey?" Her father was shocked, and said she could have no dinner until she answered. There she sat, sullenly refusing to reply; and when her father took her and put her outside the room, she only kicked the door, and screamed out: "I don't care! I don't care! I hate God! I love the Devil! I do! I do! I do!" Her mother was distressed, her father angry, the other children cried in sympathy with Nan. All Christmas

joy was gone. Nan was whipped and put to bed, with no Christmas dinner. Impulsive, rebellious, little Nan, who loved the Bible stories well, when she was told them at the right time. Her standpoint was fundamentally different from her father's; and that, he failed to realize.

It requires a considerable effort of the imagination to look back on our past life and, in the light of our present knowledge, recall our past experiences and our past judgments, so that we may realize how our point of view, our emotional attitude towards the circumstances of life, have changed with our growth. Our own point of view, even at the present time, intimate though we are with it, is hard enough to realize with any degree of clearness; and the very effort to realize it puts into too definite shape, crystallizes, as it were, that which is, in reality, shapeless, plastic and intangible.

If our own point of view is so hard to picture, it is still more difficult to picture that of the children. They have less power of self-expression than we have; their vision, in some directions clear and sharply defined, in other directions is less accurate and more limited; imagination plays a larger, memory, a smaller, part than it does with us. Moreover, in childhood, emotion dominates thought, to an extent which we often find it almost impossible to realize in practice. We can train ourselves more easily to sit in the children's chair, as it were, and see with the children's eyes than to *feel* with the children's *feelings*.

Impossible, then, though it may be, either to describe intimately our own present standpoint, to realize our change of view, or to enter completely into that of the children, it is yet not merely worth while, but, in the case of the children, absolutely necessary, to make the effort. The point of view of the man or of the woman has its origin in early childhood. The man, who is conscious in his manhood of his duties as a citizen, has probably first realized in childhood his responsibility towards his fellows in home and school. The man,

who, in adult life, is conscious of his personal responsibility for his own character, has probably first realized in childhood the need of self-mastery. The child's point of view *matters*, not merely because his point of view as a child will influence his actions as a child, and therefore make him a desirable or undesirable inmate of the home, but also because the child is the father of the man. It is needful, then, that his point of view, however provisional, however limited and often untrue in detail, must be lofty—as far as we can help to make it so. As the child grows from childhood into youth and manhood, his point of view must widen and develop and become nobler; his experience of life must not make him more self-seeking, less appreciative, with less of hope and faith and love. Although he may try to understand the lower standard set in the outer world, he must be *in* the world, but not *of* it.

We are, to a large extent, responsible for the child's point of view in early years, responsible both with regard to the direct and conscious influence which we exert over him, and with regard to the more potent, though unconscious, influence which we exert through the example of our own life. Repeatedly, in the earlier chapters, I have laid stress on our unconscious influence over the child. The child learns more from what we unconsciously teach, than from what we deliberately intend him to learn. Children reflect, to a large extent, in their point of view, that of the grown-up people around them.

"No irresistible Energy hailed *them* to church on Sundays,"<sup>1</sup> yet they went, and seemed to find no pleasure in so doing. If this is the result of the child's observation, can church-going be regarded by him as anything more than mere convention? If "Father" always expects "Mother" to wait on him hand and foot, grumbles if anything goes wrong, and rarely expresses gratitude, the boy's point of view of his

<sup>1</sup> "The Golden Age," Kenneth Graham.

mother is likely to be similar to that of his father. If we grumble at work, how can the children realize the blessedness of work? If we are selfish in our interests, are not the ever-ready sympathies of childhood likely to have died out by the time they have grown older, and their powers are ripe to use those sympathies for good?

"I didn't know Mrs. ——— was a mother, mothers always look bovvered [bothered]," said a small boy of three, unconsciously summarizing his intimate experience of one particular mother.

But I want to dwell, in this last chapter, not so much on our unconscious influence over the child, as on the necessity for a deliberate effort on our part to realize his point of view, and in particular his point of view of us, as we come into contact with him. Our dealings with him are only effectual in so far as he understands us and responds to us; he will only respond if we understand him.

"I've often wondered," says Mr. Dooley, "what a little boy thinks about us that call ourselves grown-up, because we can't grow up any more. We wake him up in the morning when he wants to sleep. We make him wash his face whin he knows it don't need washing thin as much as it will later, and we sind him back to comb his hair in a way that he don't approve iv at all. We fire him off to school just about the time iv day whin any wan ought to be out iv dures. . . . An' so it goes. If he don't do any iv these things or if he docsn't do thim th' way ye think is th' right way, some one hits him or wants to. Talk about happy childhood! How wud ye like to have twenty or thirty people issuin' orders to ye, makin' ye do things ye didn't want to do, and niver understandin' at all why it was so? 'Tis like livin' on this earth an' being ruled be the inhabitants of Mars. He has his wurruld, ye can bet on that, an' 'tis a mighty important wurruld."

We do *not* understand. We forget that what are important matters to us are the merest trivialities to children ! They are busy building a shed or an aviary in the garden ! the hammer is upstairs, or the nails, or some pieces of wood, which are just the very size for their purpose and which they have only just remembered, or a hinge is wanted, and there is one which can be taken off an old box lid, which is lying in the nursery. The things they need are so many ! and they are sure to be upstairs ! In their eagerness to get on with their building, what a trivial and trying matter it must seem to them to stop and wipe their boots thoroughly on the mat every time they go indoors. How ridiculous it seems to them for the housewife to urge that all these things should have been thought of beforehand, that it wears out the carpets when they keep on going up and down stairs !

Peggy, aged six, was poorly in bed. John, aged seven, was busy making a boat in the play-room. He was making it out of a big wooden box, a box fraught with great possibilities to John ! He was fitting up a piece of old tablecloth for a sail ; the following summer, he would take the boat out to sea : it was heavy, it would cost perhaps 10s to take it to the seaside ; but it was worth it, not a doubt of that ! He could picture himself tossing on the waves—he thought it would be safest to venture out in his bathing suit for the first time, in case it leaked a bit ! but he was going to try and fill up all the cracks. And so he hammered away. Peggy, from her bed near by, heard the hammering ; she was interested and called to John. He told her all about it ; the two keen prospective sailors thrilled with the joy of anticipation ! and, of course, Peggy wanted to see the boat. With infinite pains, John dragged that heavy box along the passage to Peggy's room (should *we* have taken such trouble ?), pulling up the stair carpet, scratching the paint on the floor, tearing the wall-paper—but Peggy saw the boat ! John was blamed ; but what

trivialities to *him* must paint and wall-paper be, when he is filled with the desire of creation!

Florence, only a little over two years old, was to go out for a walk. She had put her dolly in its cradle in a cosy corner, now she must leave the doll and come at once, for Nurse was waiting to get her ready. But Florence would not come. "Chif, chif,"—she cried, and ran this way and that, looking for something—Nurse knew not what; and screaming in her agitation, when Nurse insisted on games being at an end. Games forsooth! as if Dolly were a mere plaything, even to Baby Florence! Florence refused to come; Nurse used force; Florence only screamed more loudly. What was it that Nurse did not understand?—Florence had mislaid, and could not find, the handkerchief ("chif") which she knew ought to be under her dolly's chin. The baby was *never* left in his cradle without a handkerchief; Florence knew that. She herself was never put to rest without a handkerchief. Could she neglect her baby? The nurse had failed to enter into the child's point of view.

The child must learn to modify his own actions and character for the sake of the society of which he is a member, but we must understand him; our influence over him increases year by year, if only we understand.

I am often asked, when lecturing on these subjects, to explain why the children in so many of the stories which I quote were so responsive to treatment. What if Nancy, for instance, had refused to sit in the chair into which her mother lifted her? What if the children, for whom we may judge rest or solitude to be desirable, refused to see the matter in that light, and made so much fuss that the rest or the solitude became harmful, rather than beneficial?

The only answer one can give is, that if we have sufficient insight and understand the children, we can win them over more and more on to our side. It is a matter of kindly consideration and sympathy in *little* things; of never interfering unless it is absolutely



necessary; of not expecting the impossible; of confident expectation of goodness rather than undue insistence upon goodness. A mother, leaving her children in charge of the nurse for a day, remarked to one of them, who was an awkward little customer to deal with: "Try and be a good little lad while I am away." "It all depends on the way I am handled," was the quick reply; "I'll be all right if *she* is all right." Kindness and wise sympathy on our part, generally speaking, beget helpfulness and response from the child. A want of sympathy and the "lust of power" on our part arouses a desire for rebellion.

A big strong lad of nine years old was asked one day by his mother to go some little errand. He was just going to obey, when suddenly a thought struck him. "What would you do if I didn't do what you told me? You couldn't *make* me do it now that I am big, unless I chose!" "No, I know I couldn't," his mother replied; "but you always do finally what I ask."—"Even when you won't most, you do, don't you?" she might have said, paraphrasing the story from *Punch*—"Well, why do I then?" he urged. "Because," his mother replied, "you know now in your heart that I shouldn't ask you to do anything which was not right and reasonable; you know too that I have always tried to be fair to you, and you know that I understand and sympathize with your desire to use your own will, rather than follow mine." The lad thought for a minute. "Yes," he said, "the inner part of me that I don't understand says you're quite right. I *do* choose to do what you ask me, because I feel that you love and understand, but my mind didn't know that before. It's awfully interesting!" He was a boy who, for the most part, always obeyed his mother; but a lad, more rebellious and self-willed by nature, was never born.

The consciousness that his individual needs and powers are not merely taken into account, but respected, gradually brings the most rebellious nature into

harmony with the law, if the law is just and right, leaving ample room for freedom. Sometimes the child is moody and cross-grained from bodily disturbances; capricious, troublesome, the very opposite of docile, from physical causes. These must be wisely dealt with. But putting these aside, more than half the difficulties of training the most unmanageable children would disappear, if we recognized and respected their point of view.

We too early lose touch with our own childhood: we forget its joys and its temptations: we are often unnecessarily hard upon the children. It is such a simple matter, when anything goes wrong, and we know not why, to put the blame upon some child!

A little lad was found one morning by a lady friend sobbing bitterly by his garden gate. She stopped to enquire what was wrong. "Father will be so angry with me when he comes back home," he sobbed out. "Why, dear, what have you done?" she asked. "I haven't done anything, but I know he'll be angry," and the tears broke out afresh, "it isn't me this time, it *really* isn't me. A new baby has come to our house, and Father is away. He'll be so angry when he comes back, and he always says it's my fault when anything goes wrong!"

We want the hammer and it is missing: probably one of the children has had it, we say at once! A chair or a jug is found broken, no one had confessed about it, probably one of the children was responsible! It may be so. There was no doubt much truth in a certain father's attitude towards his mischievous son, when he said that he might as well whip him whenever he came across him, because, if he wasn't in mischief at that moment, he was probably just out of it, or would be in it before long! But what of the child's point of view? Is it not often the case that we give the dog a bad name, and he endeavours to earn it?

"These elders" (the Olympians), writes Kenneth

Graham, "were further removed from us [children] than the kindly beasts who shared our natural existence in the sun. This estrangement was fortified by an abiding sense of injustice, arising from the refusal of the Olympians ever to defend, to retract, to admit themselves in the wrong, or to accept similar concessions on our part . . . [Even when the orchard didn't produce its usual quota of apples] the failures of of Nature were not infrequently ascribed to *us*!"

But to enter all the time into the child's point of view often needs a bigger effort than we realize.

Let us attempt to consider in detail some respects in which the child's point of view differs from ours. Part of the distinguishing mark of his point of view to start with, as compared with that of a youth or man is, as I have already said, its absence of any definiteness. In some respects, it was different to-day from what it was yesterday; this evening, when he was weary with work and play, it was different from what it was this morning at breakfast-time; in the middle of the morning, when the rain began, and he knew that the match must be postponed, the whole aspect of life was changed for him. It changes according to the particular circumstances of the time, it varies with his physical condition, his state of feeling. And yet he has an individuality of his own, a point of view of his own, however provisional. His own point of view, his *average* point of view, as we might express it, is indefinite enough, depending as it does on his predominating mood or feeling, which is in itself year by year undergoing modification, and on his past experiences, which widen from day to day; but his point of view at any particular moment is more variable still. This variability we need to understand and reckon with. We need to adapt our actions, as far as possible, so as to avoid discord with it. The child himself has not the power to control the circumstances, which are modifying from time to time his

average point of view, nor can he understand, in the way in which a grown person is able, the effect of circumstances upon him. We need to do this for him. If, when we find the nursery untidy, the children tired and cross and ready for bed, we choose *that* time to impress upon them the duty of tidiness, the wastefulness of disorder, can they then respond? Is the *end* of a meal, when the child is perhaps more than satisfied, the time for him to appreciate the wrong of waste, when he has more on his plate than he can manage to eat? Was ever a child impressed by being told at such a moment that many little children would be glad to have what he has left on his plate? A penny, held close in front of our eyes, will obscure the sun; one grief, one annoyance, one acute sensation, sufficiently vivid in the focus of consciousness, will distort the child's point of view. If then we want to influence him, we must choose those times in which he is ready to respond, in which his mind is open to receive impressions. There must be mutual understanding.

There is one matter which we grown-ups, with our wider experience, often fail to realize, and that is, the importance to the tiny child, with his very limited experience, of the habitual relations of time and place, cause and effect. For instance, a small child who is in the habit of having his mug of milk at bedtime in the day-nursery, may object vigorously if expected to drink the same in the night nursery! Another, who is accustomed to have her chair in a certain position while her hair is being brushed at night, may forcibly rebel if made to sit anywhere else, or if the chair is put anywhere else! Such associations of time and place constitute for them the order of their little world; their narrow experience demands an ordered universe, or they are at sea. As the child grows and his interests become more varied, his imagination keener, the brushing of hair, the drinking of milk,

gradually become more or less mechanical, his thoughts are elsewhere while he is doing it. The particular cup he drinks out of, the chair in which he sits, then no longer matter; freedom to carry out his ideas is what he now most desires. But while he is small, let him have his ordered universe, even in matters which to us are trivial and unimportant; when he is older, let him enjoy the maximum of freedom, even at the cost of a little additional trouble to ourselves. Their point of view is necessarily limited by their experience; but it is natural to them, let us respect it. The child's outlook must be the result of *his* experience, not ours; of *his* special interests and not ours; of *his* temperament and not ours. We are so anxious that he should become his *best* self, that, in dwelling on the best, we lose sight of the *self*. Forcing is harmful.

Yet it is possible to *over*-recognize a child's individuality. We cannot allow a boy of twelve to give all his time to reading and study, poring over his books, and neglecting friends and games and physical exercise, simply because he is following his own bent. The boy, who is by nature a bully, cannot be allowed to bully unchecked. The girl, who is by nature vain and selfish, must learn to think of others. We cannot allow the children to ride rough-shod over us, simply because in so doing they are exercising their natural impulses! Our aim is to combine a recognition of individuality with the shaping of the child's character, according to the ideal ends of the society in which he lives; to help him to develop himself, even through some repression of self. While it is true that we injure the child by thrusting upon him our grown-up ideals as such, the opposite tendency of leaving him mainly to guide himself, according to his own standpoint, is equally pernicious. It is right that we should insist in childhood on the doing of many things which are needed in later life, if that life is to be lived at its best. The doing of work for the sake of the work, the doing of right because it *is* right, cannot be begun too early. The

child's habit of living influences his point of view for good or bad, as much as, perhaps even more than, his point of view influences his life. Forcing of grown-up ideals upon children is bad; recognition of their respective individualities is good; but some restraint is needful. We must find the happy mean between repression and development, and we must above all understand the children and their standpoint.

The point of view from which we look at life is chiefly the result of our prevailing temperament. Here again we grown-ups differ fundamentally from children. As we grow older, we more and more look ahead, and estimate, with a varying amount of caution, the result of our actions. Children, for the most part, dwell intensely in the present; they are uncritical optimists. I am aware that, for short periods, they are equally uncritical pessimists, when their desires are frustrated, since childish griefs are keen; but the pessimistic mood vanishes like magic in the face of some slight diversion. The way in which a child, after the first pangs of disappointment are over, proceeds to make the best of things, reminds one of the optimist fly, who, instead of drowning in the bowl of milk, kicked and kicked, until his active movements resulted in the creation of tiny lumps of butter, on which he floated to the edge of the bowl and jumped off!

A cherished mechanical engine ceases to "work"; tears are dried and the engine is taken to pieces, its "works" diverted to some other purpose, and the last state of that engine is an improvement on the first! The pet canary dies and the children are for a time inconsolable; but gradually the optimistic mood reasserts itself in the thrilling interest of stuffing the bird, or planning a grand funeral! This delightful optimism in children is closely connected with the vividness of the child's imagination, his keen zest for play, his superabundant energy, his readiness to act, his unthinking spontaneity; and it is this same power of

vivid imagining which make things, which are unimportant to us, important to them, and vice-versa.

"To anything but appearances, [these elders] were blind. . . . They never set foot within firwood or hazel copse, nor dreamt of the marvels hid therein. The mysterious sources, sources as of old Nile, that fed the duck-pond, had no magic for them. They were unaware of Indians, nor recked they anything of bisons or of pirates (with pistols !), though the whole place swarmed with such portents !" To grown-up people, a sofa is a sofa and nothing more, merely a place to rest when they are weary. To the child, it is full of possibilities. It is a ship in mid-ocean, facing the perils of the storm, and the children are on a perilous voyage of discovery ; or it is the stage coach, and the lonely travellers within are protected from hordes of fierce highwaymen by the brave driver on the box, at the far end of the sofa ; or it is a camp-bed in a hospital on the battlefield. The children's world is often a mystery to grown-up people ; but how full of interests their world is. "For us," writes Kenneth Graham, "for us, perhaps the sun does not shine so brightly as it used, the trackless meadows of old time have shrunk and dwindled to a few poor acres"—stocks and shares, the income-tax, the wear and tear of carpets, the cost of boots or the latest fashions have acquired an interest greater than that of imaginary battles with fierce imaginary foes—but need we become Olympians, can we not try to understand the child ?

Another interesting point to observe in connexion with the effect of temperament in childhood on the child's point of view, is the predominance of feeling over reason, to which I have already referred at the beginning of this chapter. As the child's mind grows, a stream of impressions is constantly pouring into it from without, some of which are naturally interesting, to some of which he is forced by those in charge of him to attend. Those impressions influence the child most

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which are most closely associated with his feelings, whether pleasurable or painful. Those which contribute to his desires, his play, his imaginative life, result in pleasurable emotions; those which hinder his desires result in painful emotions. Very gradually, he assimilates these repeated experiences according to his special temperament, according to his upbringing; and groups them, more or less accurately, into certain general conclusions on life and those persons who are round about him. Such conclusions are, however, arrived at more through *feeling* than by *reason*. The experiences which count, which are remembered and stored up in the child's judgments on life, are those in which the element of emotion has been pronounced in one way or the other. Suppose that Father's home-coming at night is always connected in the child's experience with a general shout of "Hurrah, here's Father," with a romp before bed-time or cuddles by the fire in the arm-chair, while small hands are thrust into big pockets to find "surprises"—the thought of Father is full of joy; the child's point of view of him will be that he is 'a real good sort'; and this feeling-element will persist and colour the child's judgment, not only of his own father, but of fathers in general.

But suppose, on the other hand, that Father is occupied with hard brain work at home, and the children often see him when he is grave and pre-occupied, suppose they have to keep quiet lest they should disturb him, and, now and again, when romps are getting too noisy, they catch a glimpse of a worried face at the study door, a feeling of awe and distance will colour the child's point of view of his father, which may make any close comradeship difficult, even in later life. When the child concluded that "mothers always looked bothered," what did he mean but that the one mother, who mattered most to that particular child, who—because she looked "bothered"—had spoilt the fun so often, weighed in his judgment



more than the many other mothers with whom he was acquainted, but who did not matter to him so much. Children's logic is *not* logical; they generalize—we may complain—from sadly insufficient premises; feeling, not reason, determines their conclusions. We must, then, see to it, as far as possible, that, in the child's mind, the right feeling-element is associated with the right things in life; that life at home and work at school are happy; that generosity, self-dependence, mutual helpfulness, all lead to increased happiness. This will not be the case if we are slack and capricious in our discipline, or if we make undue demands on the child's nature. If a boy is obliged to put a large part of his pocket-money into the missionary box; if he is forced to share all his toys with his brothers and sisters, whether he desires or no; will generosity be associated with a feeling of pleasure? Professor Sully tells a story of a child who had been promised sixpence when she could play her scales without fault. She succeeded in the exploit on her sixth birthday. The sixpence was given to her, but, soon after, her mother suggested that she should spend the money in fruit to give to her (the mother's) invalid friend!<sup>1</sup> Was this fair? Could she *enjoy* using her money in this way?

The child's strongest impressions are received within the home; his happiness depends, to an extent which we sometimes hardly realize, on our understanding of his point of view. Yet, for all his dependence, he is often at times extraordinarily self-centred. "Self" looms large in his little horizon, and, for a time, this is right and natural. Two boys, aged five and three, were playing in their garden, swinging on the gate. A gentleman, who knew them a little, stopped in passing, and told them it was not safe. In the elder boy's point of view, this passer-by belonged to that class of persons who have no right to

<sup>1</sup> "Studies of Childhood," p. 292.

exercise authority. He retorted rudely, and the gentleman replied that, if he spoke in that way, he would tell his father. "My father is nothing to me," said the mite in a lofty tone. In an awe-struck whisper, as the gentleman passed on, his younger brother said: "Isn't he, Johnnie, isn't your father nothing to *you*?"

A devoted aunt and mother had been playing cricket on a hot summer's afternoon with a small lad of three, denying themselves gladly for the sake of giving him pleasure. In a short time, without even saying "Thank you," the youngster suddenly threw down his bat—"I've had enough of this soft game!" was his sole remark.

Gratitude is a highly elaborated virtue, difficult to acquire; and, except in so far as it is merely a sense of favours to come, it implies a distinct realization of the other person's point of view as well as our own. We have no right to *expect* this, even though we ought to *encourage* it, in a small child, who is only just beginning to be able to realize himself. Absence of gratitude is a natural phase in the child's development. We should no more regard it as necessarily a fault in him at this early age not to be truly grateful, than we regard it as a fault that he cannot go for a twenty-mile walk like ourselves. Gratitude is a virtue which needs to be acquired gradually; the child's point of view at the start is necessarily limited.

Only a few words more, in conclusion, on the influence of temperament. Where the temperament is specially difficult—sulky, passionate, intensely strong-willed, grasping or abnormally egotistical—it is bound to influence the child's point of view; and it is a mistake to worry over the latter, until education has modified the former. Right living, the gradual gain of self-mastery, the unconscious influence of work faithfully done, the daily strengthening of good impulses and weakening of bad ones, gradually modify the child's

character. His temperament is *not* like his shadow, away from which he cannot get. His character alters, year by year, and with it, all unconsciously, his outlook on life.

Peter, as a small boy of eight or nine, was unduly envious of riches. After being out to tea with any of his friends who were "better off" than his own people, he would come home unhappy. His parents were "comfortably off"; but he wished for more than comfort—expensive toys, plenty of pocket-money, luxurious living, motor-bicycles, were that for which he longed! It was pointed out to him that he could not expect to be rich when he grew up, except as the result of his own hard work; and that the time to begin work was then and there, if he wished in manhood to attain his end. Poor Peter, he preferred a life of pleasure to work! But he buckled to, the desire for future wealth helping to spur him on; and as he acquired the habit of conscientious work, his point of view changed. There was no longer time to dwell on the desire for wealth for its own sake, other and more urgent needs were awaking higher desires in him, as his character developed in the doing of honest work.

If the example which we set the children, and which they unconsciously accept, is, as far as we can make it, a lofty one—then, as long as the boy does his duty faithfully, putting his best energies into his life, we need not be *over*-anxious as to his point of view. His point of view influences his actions; but his actions, to an even greater extent, react upon his point of view, and these we can largely control in early years: temperament is, after all, only one of the factors which determine his outlook.

These, then, are the conclusions to which we are finally brought:—

The child's point of view should be lofty, and, as he grows older, it should widen, strengthen, remaining free from self-seeking.

In so far as his natural temperament tends to detract from the loftiness of his standpoint, we must help him to strengthen the better side of his nature, to acquire mastery over the weaker side.

Since his actions influence his point of view to an even greater extent than his point of view influences his actions, we must insist in childhood on the doing of many things which are right in themselves, even though the child, from his own standpoint, cannot understand their importance.

In so far as we exert our *unconscious* influence over him through our actions, words, and even our thoughts, and thus affect his point of view, we must realize the necessity of a high standard of life and thought for ourselves.

In so far as we, in our deliberate training of the child, *consciously* modify his actions and impulses to action, which, in their turn, influence his outlook on life, our dealings with him are more effective when we enter into and understand his point of view, and the extent to which, and manner in which, it differs from our own.

But, in striving to influence the growing child for good, we must ever beware of exerting an *undue* influence. The child's point of view should be his own. Even though some restraint is necessary, freedom to develop is even more necessary. He should preserve his own individuality.

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